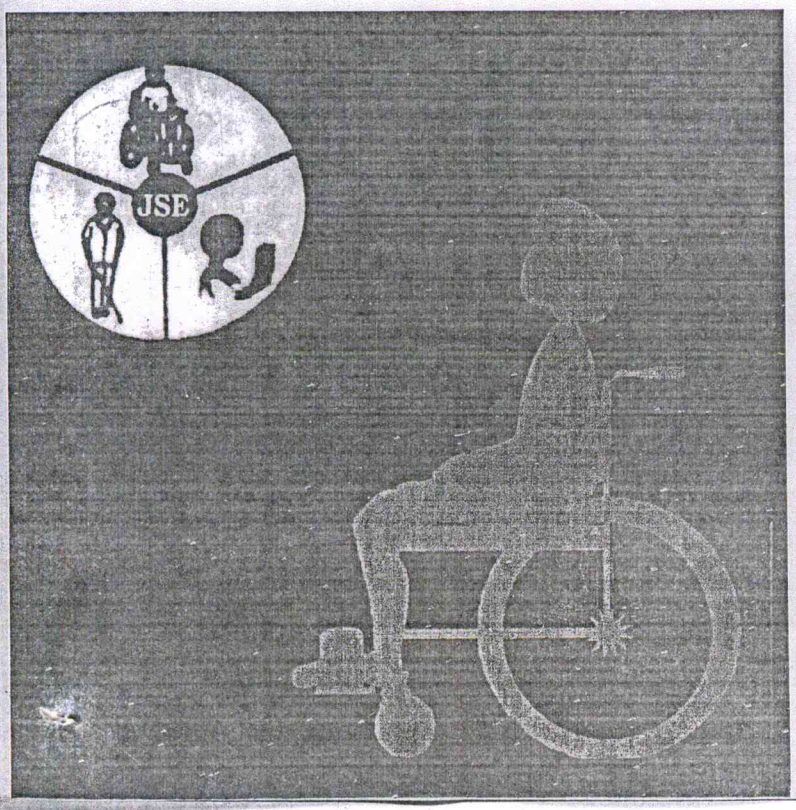
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Editorial

Management of Special Needs Education in Nigeria

A cursory look at the philosophy and objectives of special education programme of the various departments of Special Education in Nigeria indicates that the main thrust of their programmes is to imbue students who enroll in the programmes with necessary intellectual and professional skills for managing children with special needs in and out of the classroom. One assumption here is that those who facilitate special needs education in Nigeria are conversant with the unique nature of the child with special needs as well as the emerging trends in special education occasioned by the advent of information and communication technology, the growing population of persons with special needs, harmful effects of drugs and radiation on the unborn child and other forms of malformation and learning difficulties seen in the classroom today.

Unfortunately, many teachers in special needs education still operate in the classroom with 20th century skills. The 21st century classroom should be technology-driven. Digitalised assistive technologies should be liberally deployed in the classroom. We have a responsibility here to unlearn education. Special Need Education in the 21st century should emphasise core areas such as critical thinking, creativity collaboration and communication. There is need therefore to repackage the existing curriculum in special needs education to buy into the orientation of the 21st century classroom.

Facilitators of special needs education should be sponsored to go for re-training in modern arts and science of special needs education in Europe or USA. Such in-service offers may have a validity period of six months or a maximum of one year. In the interim, a few staff may be sent out on a short-term basis of retraining programme and they on their return, retrain their colleagues.

Professional bodies like the National Association for Exceptional Children (NAEC) and Nigeria Association for Special Education Teachers (NASET) should be able to take up the challenge and persuade relevant authorities to update the skills of serving teachers. This is one veritable way of ensuring that special needs education in Nigeria is managed in line with global best practices.

Ikechukwu Ambrose Nwazuoke, *Ph.D*
Professor of Special Education
Editor-in-Chief

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Call for Papers

The Editorial Board of ***Journal of Special Education*** invites articles from willing scholars for consideration and publication in her next issue which will be published in July, 2016.

Guidelines

(i) Articles should be scholarly, original and written in English language.

(ii) To accelerate publication of any papers the following editorial instructions and policies should be strictly followed when submitting manuscripts for consideration. They should be submitted in duplicate, typed double spaced on one side of a quarto-size paper and should not exceed 15 pages including references and copied on a CD or flash disk.

(iii) The cover page of the article should contain the title of the paper, author's name, status and institutional address.

(iv) Every article should be headed by an abstract of not more than 200 words.

(v) All tables, graphs and diagrams should be in the appropriate places in the paper and not on a separate sheet. There should be no footnoting.

(vi) The American Psychological Association (APA) style of referencing should be used.

(vii) Authors whose articles are found publishable will be required to pay a publication fee of fifteen thousand naira (₦15,000.00) only. A peer review fee of two thousand naira only (₦2,000.00) will also be charged.

(viii) The Editor-in-Chief will acknowledge receipt of all articles promptly.

(ix) Relevant adverts would be published as follows:
Full page = ₦20,000.00; Half page ₦10,000.00.

(x) All manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief.

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Academic Anxiety as Correlate of Academic Achievement of Students in Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria

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Abstract

The students in higher institutions nowadays are not achieving as expected of them to do, their results are declining every semester and it becomes thing of concern to all stakeholders in the field of education; in light of this the study investigated academic anxiety as correlation to academic achievement of students. The study adopted a correlation research design approach. One instrument was used to collect data titled academic anxiety questionnaire (AAQ) from the respondents. Academic Achievement Questionnaire (r = 0.78). Two hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A total 250 respondents participated in the study. The data gathered were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and T-test. The result revealed that there is significant relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of students (rCal = 0.87, p□0.05). Also, there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of students based on their level of academic anxiety(tCal = 0.75, p□0.05), Based on the findings, the study recommended that Students in higher institution should be exposed to a psychological course that will help them in managing academic anxiety.

Key words: *Academic Anxiety, Academic Achievement, Gender*

Background

In today's world, education plays important role in the development and success of an individual and national development and that is the reason why government is doing her best to provide equal educational opportunities to the citizens. In formal education sector, academic achievement of students in schools is the primary measure of level of students' achievement, which reveals the strength and weakness of the students.

In Nigeria today, academic achievement of students in most institutions are not encouraging at all, students are not living up to expectation and this has been a thing of concern to the stakeholders in education. Academic achievement refers to the extent at which students have achieved their educational goals. Ademola, Akintunde and Yakasai (2010) revealed that academic achievement of students is the measure of the level of education attained, which is meant to achieve the curriculum objective of success and priority as defined by the society, this implies that academic achievement predicts students' success. Academic achievement

also means the outcome of education to the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals, which could be influenced by anxiety. Students generally are expected to maintain their optimal academic achievement in schools, however reverse is the case for some students in the University. Students' academic achievement in higher institutions of learning has become worrisome, and the achievement at the end of session is declining every day.

For this low academic achievement among students in higher institution of learning in Nigeria, many researchers have looked into factors that contribute to academic achievement of students, among these factors are family educational background. Asikhia (2010) noted that family educational background and socio-economic status influence the academic performance of students. According to Eweniyi (2005), different factors are capable of influencing the academic performance of a child. Such factors may be the child's internal state (intelligence, state of health, motivation and anxiety) and their environment (availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like textbooks and well-equipped laboratories). Osunloye (2008), Ushie, Onongha, Owolabi & Emeka (2012) reported that family background is the foundation for children's development. As such family background in terms of family type, size, socio-economic status and educational background play important role in children's educational attainment and social integration.

Academic anxiety has been seen as a factor that can influence the academic achievement of students in university. Anxiety is a basic human emotion consisting of apprehension and uncertainty that typically appears when an individual perceives an occurrence as being a threat to the ego or self-esteem (Harris & Coy, 2003). Healther (2009) revealed that anxiety can occur as a result of stress, affecting learning and memory and also affecting academic performance negatively. Callahan (2001) revealed that anxiety is one of the psychophysiology difficulties and there are various forms of anxiety which includes excessive worrying, a sense of fear, restlessness, overt emotional responses, and negative thinking. Good (1973) in Shakir (2014), revealed that anxiety is a state of apprehension, tension, or uneasiness characterised by fear, dread, or uncertainty about something the source of which is largely unknown or unrecognised by the individual; it may consist in persistent apprehensions of future events as well as in generalised emotional reactions to any choice point or decision. Lenka & Kant (2012) reported that anxiety plays a crucial role in human life because most of the individuals are the victims of anxiety which is related to the impending danger from the environment of the academic institutions including in certain subjects like Mathematics, English and so on. Shakir (2014) further stated that academic anxiety is a mental feeling of uneasiness or distress in reaction to a school situation that is perceived negatively.

Numerous researchers found out that academic anxiety has influence on students' academic achievement. Jon (2012) explained that the consequences of anxiety during test or examination may limit the educational or vocational development and promotion through educational system. Afolayan, Donald, Onasoga, Babafemi and Agama (2013) opined that it is normal for a student to feel anxious before a test or examination but it becomes problematic when the level of anxiety is high, this has negative influence on students'

academic achievement in an institution. A study conducted by Shakir (2014) revealed that there exist negative correlation between the academic achievement and the academic anxiety of students, Shakir (2014) revealed further that there were significant difference between academic achievement of high and low academic anxiety groups of students. Similarly, Hancock (2001) reported that students with high academic anxiety level performed poorly and were less motivated to learn. Pomerantz, Altermatt, and Saxon (2002) investigated gender difference in academic performance and internal distress, it was revealed that girls outperformed boys in all subjects but were more prone to internal distress than boys. Singh and Thukral (2009) reported an inverse relationship between academic achievement and academic anxiety. In the same vein, Singh (2009) revealed a significant negative correlation between academic anxiety and academic achievement. Rezazadeh and Tavakoli (2009) found a significant negative correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement and also revealed that female students have a higher level of test anxiety than male. Vitasari, Wahab, Othman, Herawan, and Sinnadurai (2010) found a significant correlation between high level anxiety and low academic performance. Jain (2012) asserted that academic anxiety is negligibly negatively correlated with academic achievement and there was no significant difference in the academic anxiety of boys and girls. Also, Ali, Awan, Batool and Muhammad (2013) concluded that there was negative correlation of test anxiety with students' acahievement in the subject of English; and female students had higher test anxiety than male students. Sridevi (2013) reported a negative low correlation between general anxiety and academic achievement and an inverse relationship between general anxiety and academic achievement. Researches have also shown that school students with higher level of anxiety have lower academic performance, and negative correlation exist between academic anxiety and academic achievement (Hamzah, 2007); McCraty (2007); Ali, Awan, Batool & Muhammad (2013); Cassady (2002); & Hancock, 2001)). In conclusion, academic anxiety seems to be one of the psychological factors that can predict the students' academic achievement in schools. Therefore, the study investigated the relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of students.

Statement of the problem

The students in higher institutions in the current dispensation are not performing well academically as expected. Their results tend to be declining consistently on an average note and it becomes a thing of concern to all stakeholders in the field of education. Many researches have focussed on other factors that might cause this decline in the academic achievement; in light of this, the researchers are investigating academic anxiety as correlation to academic achievement of students.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significant level

Ho_1. There is no significant relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of students.

Ho_2 There is no significant difference between students' level of anxiety and academic achievement.

Method

The study adopted descriptive research design of correlation type; the reason for this was that the researchers intended looking at the relationship between the independent variables (academic anxiety and gender) and dependent variable (academic achievement). The respondents for the study comprise 250 students from College of Education, Kwara State University, Malete. They were selected using random sampling technique. Beck Anxiety Inventory developed by Beck, Epstein, Brown and Steer (1998) for measuring anxiety was adapted for the study. The adapted academic anxiety questionnaire (AAQ) comprises 20 items that was designed in Likert's 4-point response format that ranged from Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3) and Strongly agree (4). The score on the scale ranged from 0-40 and 41-80 as low anxiety and high anxiety respectively. The CGPA of students were used to represent the academic achievement score. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.78. All the respondents were given the questionnaire to fill; the data gathered were analysed using Pearson product moment correlation and T-test.

Result

The result of the study is presented below.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of students.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation result of relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of students

	N	X	SD	rCal	Sig	Decision
Academic Anxiety	250	2.09	0.25	0.87	0.02	Rejected
Academic Achievement		2.12	1.15			

Table 1 reveals the relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of students. Academic anxiety has mean score of 2.09 and standard deviation of 0.25 while academic achievement has mean score 2.12 and standard deviation 1.15, It was significant at 0.02 which is less than the fixed sig 0.05 ($P<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that state there is no significant relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of students is not accepted, it means that academic anxiety has significant relationship with academic achievement (academic anxiety predicts students' academic achievement).

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between students' level of academic anxiety and their academic achievement.

Table 2: independent T-test result of the difference between students' levels of academic anxiety and students' academic achievement.

	Level	N	Mean	SD	tcal	Df	Sig	Decision
Academic Anxiety	High	147	55.27	6.34	0.19	87	.75	Not rejected
	Low	103	55.57	7.02				

Table 2 indicates the difference between academic anxiety and academic achievement, high academic anxiety has mean score of 55.27 and standard deviation 6.34 while low academic anxiety has mean 55.57 and standard deviation 7.02. It was observed sig is 0.75 which is greater than the fixed sig 0.05 (P>0.05). Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of students based on their level of academic anxiety (low and high) is accepted. This means that students' level of academic anxiety does not predict students' academic achievement.

Discussion

From the analysis of the data gathered on academic anxiety as correlate to academic achievement of students, table 1 reveals that there was significant relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of students. This finding conforms with the result of Jon (2012) who revealed that academic anxiety can limit the students' academic achievement. The finding is also in line with the result of Rezazdeh and Tavakoli (2009) who found that a significant negative correlation exist between test anxiety and academic achievement and Ali, Awan, Batool and Muhammad (2013) asserted that there exist negative correlation between test anxiety and students' academic achievement. This implies that academic anxiety predicts students' academic achievement in university but the result is no in line with the finding of Singh and Thukral (2009) who reported that there exist inverse relationship between academic achievement and academic anxiety. The result in table 2 shows that there was no significant difference in the academic achievement of students based on their level of academic anxiety (Low and High). This finding agrees with the result of Jain (2012) who revealed that there was no significant difference between level of anxiety and students' academic achievement, the implication of this is that students' level of academic anxiety does not really predict students' academic achievement in University, this could be that there are other factors that help like seasoned lecturers teaching them or they are aware of their anxiety. The finding does not conform to the result of Hancock (2001) who reported that students with high academic anxiety level perform poorly and less motivated to learn than those with low academic anxiety. Similarly, Hamzah (2007) confirmed that students with high level of academic anxiety have lower academic anxiety at the end of the term.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it could be summarised that academic anxiety has significant relationship on the academic achievement of students; however there is no significant difference in academic achievement of students based on the level of academic anxiety.

Method

The study adopted descriptive research design of correlation type; the reason for this was that the researchers intended looking at the relationship between the independent variables (academic anxiety and gender) and dependent variable (academic achievement). The respondents for the study comprise 250 students from College of Education, Kwara State University, Malete. They were selected using random sampling technique. Beck Anxiety Inventory developed by Beck, Epstein, Brown and Steer (1998) for measuring anxiety was adapted for the study. The adapted academic anxiety questionnaire (AAQ) comprises 20 items that was designed in Likert's 4-point response format that ranged from Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3) and Strongly agree (4). The score on the scale ranged from 0-40 and 41-80 as low anxiety and high anxiety respectively. The CGPA of students were used to represent the academic achievement score. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.78. All the respondents were given the questionnaire to fill; the data gathered were analysed using Pearson product moment correlation and T-test.

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Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it could be summarised that academic anxiety has significant relationship on the academic achievement of students; however there is no significant difference in academic achievement of students based on the level of academic anxiety.

Recommendations

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

1. Students in higher institutions should be exposed to a psychological course on how the students' academic anxiety can be managed; this will help them in managing their academic anxiety.
2. There should be provision of counselling service by the university counsellor who will counsel students to assist them in coping with their academic anxiety.

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