



# **Self - Efficacy As A Correlates Of Psychological Adjustment Among Secondary School Adolescents In Awka Education Zone**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated self efficacy as a correlates of psychological adjustment among secondary school adolescents in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State. One research question guided the study and one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlation research design was employed for the study. The population of the study was 4,421 senior secondary two (SS2) students from 61 secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. The Sample size of the study comprised 485 SS2 drawn using simple random sampling technique. Two sets of questionnaire titled “Self Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ) “and Psychological Adjustment Questionnaire (PAQ)” were used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established using Crombach Alpha Coefficient which yielded a coefficient of 0.77 for SEQ and 0.76 for PAQ. The data obtained was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results of the study revealed among others that there was a positive relationship between adolescents’ self efficacy and their psychological adjustment. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others, that school psychologists, teachers and counsellors should design intervention programmes on self efficacy to foster psychological adjustment of students and use them to enhance students behaviours, quality of education, improve positive psychological adjustment and also prevent adolescents’ maladjustment.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Adjustment, Psychological Adjustment, Self-Efficacy

## **INTRODUCTION**

Adolescent is viewed as a young person in the period of preparation for adulthood in which time several key developmental experiences occur, such as physical and sexual maturation. Other experiences include movement towards social and economic independence and development identity. Adolescent is a young person who is in a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood. It begins with the growth spurt and accelerates into other exploratory stages which prepare the individual for stability and commitment in life. Adolescent is a teenager in the period of human development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It represents one of the critical transitions in life span, and usually associated with storm and stress. Bandura’s (2005) affirmed that different periods of life have their unique challenges and competent demands for successful functioning and that changing aspirations, time perspectives, and societal systems over the course of life span alter how people structure, regulate, and evaluate their lives.

According to Steinberg, (2007), Adolescence period is marked by menarche (first menstruation cycle) in girls and (penis growth) in boys which is considered an indicator of maturation in the development of women and men; its arrival constitutes an important element determining the transition from being a child to being a teenager. At this stage of adolescence, the bodies undergo profound and rapid transformation due to the hormonal changes and accelerate the physical growth and also the development of secondary sexual characteristics. The individual lives a new period in his/her life, seeks to define his/her role within the social circle in which he/she belongs. Adolescents in secondary

schools particularly in senior secondary two (SS2) classes, experience significant changes in their family relations, school environment and peer group affiliations, and these changes have profound effects on their motivation, learning and adjustment.

Adjustment could simply be referred to as adaptive processes in which an individual tries to fit into a particular circumstance which presents certain challenges. It is a process of maintaining harmonious relationships. It is a behavioural process by which humans maintain equilibrium among various needs or between their needs and obstacles of their environment (Ugodulunwa & Anakwe, 2012).

Psychological adjustment is a process through which people manage or cope with the demands or challenges of everyday life; attempting to deal with stress, tension, conflicts and at the same time strive to maintain harmonious relationship with the environment (Raju & Rahamtulla, 2007). Psychological adjustment problem of adolescents may develop as a result of new challenges faced as they encounter physiological, emotional, and social changes. Some may be worried about the societal acceptance of their physical appearances, their cognitive abilities, peer acceptance, progress in their careers, and even parental demands. When these are not actually handled, psychological adjustment problems may ensue. Adolescents being faced with psychological adjustment problem may be as a result of poor belief system such as low self-efficacy, since self-efficacy has to do with one's conviction of his ability to handle specific tasks.

In literature many assumptions have been made pointing at self efficacy as influential factor on psychological adjustment. Self-efficacy attracted attention of eminent scholars in connection with human behaviour. It is perceived to have strong influence on peoples' style/ pattern of life. Self-efficacy is seen as thoughts or ideas people hold about their abilities to perform tasks that are necessary in accomplishing a desired outcome (Hall & Vanice, 2010). Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as a belief in one's own ability to organize and perform certain tasks or designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives while Hall and Vance (2010), stated that 'self-efficacy are thoughts or ideas people hold about their abilities to perform those tasks necessary to achieve a desired outcome which can influence people's behaviour either positively or negatively based on their perception of their abilities concerning a particular task'. Individuals with higher self-efficacy are likely to handle situations with calmness and hence may adjust to situations better than those who do not have high self-efficacy.

Schunk and Pajares (nd) have noted that individuals obtain information to appraise their self-efficacy from their actual performances, their vicarious experiences, the persuasions they receive from others, and their physiological reactions. Bandura (1997) affirmed that self-efficacy beliefs influence task choice, effort, persistence, resilience, and achievement. Lanpert, (2007) asserted that self-efficacy significantly predicted grade point average for college students and that self-efficacy explained more than half of the variance on anxiety and depression.

Bandura's Social cognitive theory, states that most behaviour is goal-directed and that people learn through the observation of the consequences of their own and others' behaviour. Behaviour, environmental occurrences and inner factors (such as cognition, emotion, and biological events) are reciprocal influences that interact continuously. Bandura posited four primary sources of self-efficacy which included, the performance experiences which are the most significant to a clear success or failure in parents' interaction with their children. It is the most powerful source of self-efficacy. Secondly, observation of other parental practices and noting the consequences of their behaviour also influence the observers' expectancies. Thirdly, positive or negative feedback from other people is another source of self-efficacy. Finally, emotional arousal such as stress or anger, and their related physical states, can also influence self-efficacy when parents associate aversive physiological arousal with their own poor behavioural performance.

Studies by Karen Stroiney Hermann (2005), discussed the relationship between social self efficacy and psychological adjustment variables in adolescents. The study indicated that there were moderate relationship between self efficacy, depression and loneliness. As such the study carried out by Karen. S. H, concluded that self efficacy plays a deep role in adolescents psychosocial adjustment therefore it strongly predicts adolescents psychological adjustment. Another studies by Juliana Burges' Sbicigo and Debora Dalbsco Dell' Aglio (2012), tested the predictive relationship between family environment and indicators of psychological adjustment in adolescents. The study revealed that the family environment (cohesion, support and low conflict) were significant predictors of adolescents psychological adjustment. As such, the study by Juliana B.S. and Debora D.D.A concluded that

functional family relationship were important for the expression of positive psychological characteristics during adolescents.

Furthermore, Bandura maintain that adolescents with high self efficacy try challenging task more frequently and persist longer with them. He posited that adolescents with higher self efficacy beliefs are more likely to evaluate demands as a challenge because they recognize that they can overcome obstacles and focus on opportunities. More so, that academic self efficacy of students' is their judgment on their capability to organize and perform a course of action necessary to reach a successful academic performance. As a result of these apparent psychological adjustments due attributed to self efficacy, the researcher deigned to look into adolescents self efficacy in relation to their psychological adjustment.

The main purpose of this study is to find out if self-efficacy correlate psychological adjustment of secondary school adolescents in Awka Education Zone. Specifically the study sought to find out the: One research question guided the study

1. Nature of relationship between adolescents' self efficacy and their psychological adjustment?

**Research Question**

One research question guided the study

1. What is the nature of relationship between adolescents' self efficacy and their psychological adjustment?

**Hypothesis**

One hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between adolescents' self-efficacy and their psychological adjustment.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted correlation research design. The area of this study was Awka Education Zone with the population of 4,421senior secondary two (SS2) students. The sample size comprised 450 senior secondary two (SS2) school students' from ten schools. The researcher used multistage simple random sampling technique employing the balloting technique for the sample size collection. The study was guided by one research questions and one null hypothesis. Two instruments titled Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ) and Psychological Adjustment Questionnaire were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts, one academic staff in the Educational Psychology Unit of Department of Educational Foundations, another from Education Measurement and Evaluation Unit and another in the Department of Educational Guidance and Counseling Department all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts commented on each items' appropriateness and acceptability and their judgments were used for pilot test. Cronbach's alpha procedure was used for testing the reliability instrument. The SEQ yielded a coefficient of 0.77 and PAQ yielded a coefficient of 0.76. Data collected for the study were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** *What is the nature of relationship between self efficacy and adolescents' psychological adjustment?*

*Table 1: Pearson's Correlation between self efficacy and adolescents' psychological adjustment*

N	Self Efficacy	Psychological Adjustment	Decision
Self Efficacy	485	1	.192
Psychological Adjustment	485	.192	1

Positive

The result presented on Table 1 shows that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient,  $r(485) = .192$ . This is an indication that there is a positive relationship between self efficacy and adolescents' psychological adjustment.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and adolescent students psychological adjustment.

*Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between self efficacy and adolescents' psychological adjustment*

N		Self Efficacy	Psychological Adjustment	P-value	Decision
Self Efficacy	485	1	.192	0.004	
Psychological Adjustment	485	.192	1		Significant

As shown on Table 2, the  $p$ -value of  $0.04 < 0.05$ ; since the  $p$ -value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between self-efficacy and adolescent students psychological adjustment.

## DISCUSSIONS

The findings revealed that self efficacy significantly correlate adolescents' psychological adjustment and there are high positive relationship between adolescents self efficacy and their psychological adjustment. This finding is conformity with that of Hall and Vance (2010) which indicated that self efficacy correlates significantly and positively with high level of adolescents' psychological adjustment. The adolescents with high self efficacy easily adjust to the environment and likely handle situations with calmness and hence adjust to situations better than those who have low self efficacy. The finding on self-efficacy as a significant correlate of psychological adjustment can be attributed to the fact that students can simply improve their self-efficacy by observing other peers who are doing better than them, regulate their psychological behaviours and believe that they too can handle similar situations. According to Bandura (1997), adolescents acquire self-efficacy information from knowledge of others' performance through social acquaintance. Also, persuasive information, as in verbal encouragement from others can also raise self-efficacy but its effect can be transitory if subsequent performance turns out differently. When they begin to regulate their psychological adjustment based on this information, the self-efficacy increases. This increase in self-regulation in turn helps them in a better psychological adjustment. Adolescents with high self-efficacy claim to be more likable and attractive, to have better relationships, and to make better impressions on others than those with low self-efficacy, but objective measures disconfirm most of these beliefs. High self-efficacy makes people more willing to speak up in groups and to criticize the group's approach when necessary. Adjustment does not stem directly from self-efficacy, but self-efficacy may have indirect effects.

Adolescents with high self efficacy show stronger out of group favouritism, which may decrease prejudice and discrimination that may lead to better psychological adjustment. A possible explanation could be that the adolescent students, believed that they were confident and that they were capable of handling any academic, social or personal emotional challenges that they faced as students in the senior secondary school.

It was also reported that there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and adolescent students psychological adjustment. The finding of this study supported that of Karen Stroiney Hermann (2005), which opined that self efficacy plays a deep role in adolescents psychosocial adjustment therefore it significantly predicts adolescent's psychological adjustment. These findings imply that if quality of education is given to adolescent students, the tendency to indulge in some social vices would cease among them. It is believed that if adolescent students would be able to desist from unruly behaviours, they would definitely develop interest in education. In that realm, it implies that adolescent students' would be able to set and achieve their personal goals and develop their

potentials in the right direction. In the long run, they would be realistically positive in their thinking and very positively optimistic.

## CONCLUSION

In view of the above discovery, the study conclude that the self-efficacy of adolescents significantly correlate their psychological adjustment. This study therefore establishes that there high positive relationship between self-efficacy and adolescents psychological adjustment.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- a. Since psychological adjustment is strongly correlated by students self efficacy, it demands that school psychologists and counsellors should design intervention programmes on self-efficacy to foster psychological adjustment of students so that their behaviours and their quality of education be enhanced.
- b. Teachers should desist from any act or use of language that lowers students self efficacy.
- c. Parents should during Parent Teachers Dialogue (PTD) meeting be intimated on their role to enhance students self efficacy through encouragement, affirmation and necessary supports.

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