



# ISSUES IN **CURRICULUM AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

Edited by:

FOLAJOGUN V. FALAYE

JOSEPH A. ADEGBILE

Volume 2

# ISSUES IN CURRICULUM AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

## Volume II

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**Folajogun V. Falaye  
Joseph A. Adegbile**

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## SELF-EFFICACY, MATHEMATICS AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ECONOMICS

*Felix Osa Ibode & Kayode Felix Ekundayo*

### Introduction

Economics is a subject offered in Senior Secondary Schools and in most of higher institutions across the World. The course is a branch of knowledge that is concerned with the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. It can also be described as a social science that helps to study the factors that influence income and wealth and how it is been managed. Economics is classified in the (FGN 2008) as a non-vocational elective. Economics appears to be one of the most popular subjects in this category of Senior Secondary School non-vocational subjects, as it is the subject most students select voluntarily. The study of Economics exposes one to the principle of "scale of preference" which helps in choosing the most important among numerous wants. Economics also helps firms to minimize cost of production in order to maximize output. The study of the subject also helps experts to predict future economic events, by the use of statistical data obtained from previous years. Previous studies have identified several factors militating against academic performance of students in Economics. The factors range from students based factors (lack of preparedness, self-efficacy, absence from school, lateness for lectures etc.), school based (non-availability of qualified teachers, lack of conducive environment for learning, insufficient teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and other facilities that aid learning, class size and poor method of teaching), and socio-economic background of the parents.

Table 1 shows overall performance of candidates that registered for Economics from year 1996 to 2012. For example, in 1997 as could be seen from the table, out of 582,926 candidates who sat for examination, only 14.1% had credit. Also in 2003, only 22.35% had credit pass of the total number of candidates that sat for the examination. In 2012, the total number of candidates who had credit was 45.40%. The trend therefore revealed that the performance of candidates that registered for Economics yearly is below average.

**Table 1: West African Examination Council Senior Certificate Examination Result in Economics (May/June 1996-2012)**

Year	Number Enrolled	Credit 1-6		Pass P7 & P8		Fail F9	
		No	%	Pass p7 & p8	%	Fail F9	%
1996	484,508	94,740	19.5	145,160	30.0	224,608	50.5
1997	582,926	81,897	14.1	161,175	27.7	339,854	58.3
1998	651,426	143,900	22.1	202,463	31.1	305,063	46.8
1999	724,935	157,020	21.66	351,081	48.43	216,828	29.91
2000	607,630	214,864	35.36	210,285	34.60	182,481	30.04
2001	981,928	276,632	28.17	372,978	37.98	332,318	33.85
2002	868,532	193,291	22.25	394,693	45.44	280,548	32.3
2003	908,672	203,129	22.35	403,920	44.45	301,123	33.19
2004	1,076,540	287,246	26.68	468,210	43.49	321,084	29.82
2005	1,028,155	365,242	36.24	416,044	41.28	206,654	02.20
2006	1,058,135	359,766	34.00	423,254	40.00	275,114	25.00
2007	1,093,456	382,710	35.00	415,513	38.00	295,233	27.00
2008	1,230,131	592,939	49.22	392,579	32.59	201,588	16.73
2009	1,325,678	623,069	47.00	397,703	30.00	304,905	23.00
2010	1,289,876	577,009	44.73	413,267	32.03	299,600	23.23
2011	1,290,011	585,331	45.38	414,505	32.13	290,175	22.49
2012	1,230,131	585,824	45.40	409,468	31.00	304,525	23.60

Source: WAEC Public Relation Office, Lagos.

The concept of self-efficacy was first developed by Bandura (1977). He postulated that self-efficacy is a person's belief in which he sees himself performing a particular task successfully. In other words, self-efficacy is people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. High level of self-efficacy brings high level of job satisfaction (Caprara et al. 2003). This implies that a person's achievement is attributed to his personal belief which will actually motivate his personal achievement. Bandura (1977) argued that self-efficacy affects the choices people make, such as their way of acting, the effort they spend on tasks, their perseverance and their elasticity of adjustment to situation. Zimmerman (2002) viewed self-efficacy as individual perception that directs activities to develop implementation in education.

Lunenburg (2011) sees self-efficacy as "people's abilities to achieve specific tasks which also influence the tasks they prefer to learn and the goals they set for themselves." In general, people tend to learn and accomplish those tasks that they believe they will be successful in. This leads to the fact that self-efficacy has a great effect on motivation, performance and learning. Self-efficacy influences someone's thoughts, feelings and ability. Someone with a weak notion of self-efficacy is inclined to assume some tasks are more difficult and rigorous than they are



actually, strong notion of self efficacy on the other hand creates feelings of tranquility and challenge in the face of rigorous or difficult task. Conversely, negative beliefs may lead to class anxiety, low cognitive achievement and negative attitudes (Victori & Lockhart 1995) as cited in Abidin, Pour-Mohammandi and Alzwar (2012). Qudysi and Putri (2016) asserted that the higher self efficacy owned by high school students, the less anxiety the student felt before the National examination.

The emergence of English language as Lingua Franca in Nigeria was based on the fact that the British government colonized Nigeria. It follows that when Nigeria got her independence in 1960, English language grew to become the official means of communication. English Language is used in all educational settings that involve teaching and learning process. Moreover, all textbooks on the subject Economics and other subjects are written in English Language in Nigeria. English language play prominent role in Nigeria's education because it is the medium of instruction to teach all the school subjects as stated in the national policy of education in (2013). It was also stated that English language should be taught as a subject from the first to third year, and in the fourth year, it should be used as a medium of instruction in the primary school level. It is also a compulsory subject that must be passed at the junior and senior secondary school levels. It is also a major requirement for admission into the university.

English language has diverse role to play in Nigerian Economy. English is the language used in educational settings, for administration purposes, in law, communication and commerce (Akurugu 2010). Kaplan, Fisher and Rogness (2010) argued that English language has become the means of international affairs and communication. It was further added that non- English speaking nations such as China, Japan and France have started using English language to set up international television stations to tell their stories and to promote their cultural identities to the rest of the world because of the popularity of this language. English is regarded as the working language, both in the sense of the medium of work-related discussion as well as the default language for work-related vocabulary. In contrast, other languages have a social role and are used for humour and socialization (Miya Komori 2015).

English language proficiency of student implies how the student has good mastery in the use of English language. In Economics, English language is the language of instruction just like most school subjects. In other words, Economics concepts are explained in English. Therefore, Economics students ought to have mastery of the language to be able to understand concepts and principles of Economics. In fact, in some subject

areas, studies have shown that students who are proficient in English language have high academic achievement (Butler & Castellon 2000).

On the other hand, Mathematics as a subject hold a prominent place in the academic curriculum, and academic success in this subject is imperative in this age of rapid scientific and technological level that academic self-beliefs become more pronounced and that gender differences begin to appear (Ayotola & Adedeji 2009). Mathematics is an old, broad and deep discipline. Mathematics in Nigeria can be traced back to the traditional society before the introduction of formal education. Mathematics is mainly used in taking stocks of farming and trading activities, however the missionaries introduced western education in Nigeria and since that time, Mathematics has occupied a central position in the school curriculum (Lawrence & Kolawole 2007). Mathematics is not a branch of Economics but a tool of Economics analysis. Presently, Mathematics as an academic discipline can no longer be separated from Economics because they are now intertwined. Mathematics creates benchmark for Economics theory to stand and that makes Economics more presentable and understandable by giving it quantitative value. This implies that Mathematics serves as a knowledge tool, because numerous Economics theories have been set out by the application of systematic and enlightened use of mathematical symbols. For example, the National income equation for an open economy is given as;  $Y = C + I + G + X - M$ . Where  $Y$  = Income;  $C$  = Consumption;  $I$  = Investment;  $G$  = Government Expenditure;  $X$  = Export;  $M$  = Import;  $X - M$  = Net Export. Since Economics theories cannot do without Mathematical symbols and numerical values, it then means understanding of Mathematics subject might be among those important factors that helps students in achieving high in Economics.

To support this fact, Puiu (2012), ascertained that, the relationship between Mathematics and Economics can be described through the separate intellectual activities taking place in the two domains which, from epistemological point of view, can be accomplished by analyzing and interpreting the ideas and practices from each science according to the premises and the laws by which they are governed.

Mathematics proficiency is predicated on the quantitative ability of the students. Mathematics proficiency of student is important in improving the performance of students in quantitative related subjects. In Economics, Mathematical application is needed because there are concepts and assumptions that require students to be proficient in mathematics. Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English Language proficiency may be important factors in students' academic achievement in Economics.

## Statement of the Problem

Economics is a social science that study human behaviour as a means between end and scarce means which has alternative use. Economics importance is further given credence for its intrinsic benefit in making optimal choices as regards economic phenomenon. As important as Economics is to national and personal development, students' performance in this subject remain very poor. Various efforts have been made by researchers to identify why students' poor performance in the subject remains unabated.

Some researchers have traced the problem to lack of educational facilities, while others blame the poor performance of students on lack of educational facilities and ineffective method of teaching the subjects. While other researchers blame it on the prevailing poor economic situation in the country, but most of these studies have not looked at the influence of self-efficacy, in Mathematics and English language proficiency on students' Economics achievement. Therefore, the study investigated the relationship between Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-language proficiency as correlates of students' achievement in Economics at Senior Secondary School 2 (SSS2) level in Osun State.

## Research Questions

- (1) What is the strength and direction of relationship among students' Self-efficacy, mathematics proficiency and English-Language proficiency on their achievement in Economics?
- (2) What is the relative contribution of Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language proficiency of the students on their academic achievement in Economics?
- (3) What is the composite contribution of Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language proficiency of the students on their academic achievement in Economics?

## Methodology

### Research Design

A correlational design of survey type was used in this study. This is because the researcher was interested in investigating possible relationships among variables of this study without manipulating them.

### Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of all Senior Secondary School 2 (SSS2) students in public secondary school in Osun State.

### Sampling Techniques and Sample

The study adopted multi-stage sampling technique in selecting the sample. Firstly simple random sampling method was used to select 5 local government areas in Osun State, 3 senior secondary schools were selected from each local government area using simple random sampling, this implies that 15 public secondary schools were considered for this research, simple random technique was also employed to select 20 students each from the 15 public secondary schools which make the total number of participants 300.

### Research Instruments

The following instruments were used for the study;

- Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ)
- Mathematics Proficiency Test (MPT)
- English-language Proficiency Test (ELPT)
- Economics Achievement Test (EAT)

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significant.

### Result and Discussion

**Research Question 1:** What is the strength and direction of relationship of students' Self-efficacy and students' achievement in Economics?

**Table 2: Inter-correlation matrix, of the strength and direction of relationship among students' Self-efficacy, mathematics proficiency and English-Language proficiency on their achievement in Economics**

Variables	Self-efficacy	Mathematics Proficiency	English Language Proficiency	Economics achievement
Self-efficacy	1			
Mathematics Proficiency	.204**	1		
English Language Proficiency	.384**	.264**	1	
Economics Achievement	.084	.258**	.060**	1

The Pearson correlation of 0.084 in table 2 showed that positive relationship exists between students' self-efficacy and students' achievement in Economics, although the degree of association is very low. The result also showed that the positive relationship between students' self-efficacy and Students' achievement in Economics was not statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Also, the table shows that there is positive relationship between mathematics proficiency and achievement in Economics. The Pearson correlation of 0.204 in the table showed that positive relationship exists between Students' Mathematics Proficiency and Students' achievement in Economics. The result also showed that the positive relationship between Students' Mathematics Proficiency and Students' achievement in Economics was statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . The Pearson correlation of 0.348 in the table showed that positive relationship exists between Students' English-Language Proficiency and Students' achievement in Economics. The result also showed that the positive relationship between Students' English-Language Proficiency and Students' achievement in Economics was statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

**Research Question 2:** What is the relative contribution of Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language proficiency of the students on their academic achievement in Economics?

**Table 3: Regression Result of Relative Contribution of Students' Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language Proficiency on their Academic Achievement in Economics**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.459**	1.522		4.899	.000
Mathematics proficiency	.224**	.059	.227	3.790	.000
Self-efficacy	6.825E-005	.024	.000	.003	.998
English-language proficiency	.312**	.046	.362	6.833	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Students' achievement in Economics  
 b. \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result presented in this section showed the relative contribution of students' Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language proficiencies of the students on their academic achievement in Economics. Specifically, table 4 presented the regression result of the impact (in terms of magnitude, direction and significance) of students' Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language proficiencies of the students on their academic achievement in Economics.

Table 3 showed the relative contributions of the independent variables (Self-efficacy, Mathematics proficiency and English Language proficiency) to students' academic achievement in Economics. The table showed that both students' Mathematics proficiency ( $\beta=0.227$ ,  $t=3.790$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and students' English-language proficiency ( $\beta=0.362$ ,  $t= 6.833$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ) significantly contributed to the students' achievement in Economics. The table also revealed that the direction of the relative contribution of Mathematics and English-Language Proficiencies were positive. This implied that Mathematics Proficiency and English-Language Proficiency of a student will enhance his academic performance in Economics. The result also showed that students' Self-efficacy did not have significant impact on students' achievement in Economics.

**Research Question 3:** What is the composite contribution of Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language proficiency of the students on their academic achievement in Economics?

**Table 4: Regression Result of Composite Contribution of Students' Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language Proficiency on their Academic Achievement in Economics**

R = 0.415					
R Square = 0.172					
Adjusted R Square = 0.164					
Model	Sum of Squares	d.f	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	858.986	3	286.329	20.549	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	4124.360	296	13.934		
Total	4983.347	299			

Table 4 presented the composite contribution of students' Self-efficacy, Mathematics and English-Language proficiency of the students on students' academic achievement in Economics. The results of multiple regression correlation coefficients indicating the relationship between the predictor variables (Self-efficacy, students' Mathematics proficiency and

students' English Language proficiency) and students' achievement in Economics is 0.415. The R square of the relationship is 0.172, this indicated that the predictor variables accounted for 17.2% variation in the students' achievement in Economics. So also on the overall significance of the model of students' achievement in Economics, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) given as  $F= 20.549$ ;  $P< 0.05$ , showed that the model is statistically significant. The result therefore indicated that there is significant linear relationship between the predictor variables and students' achievement in Economics.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The discussion of findings is based on the results of the findings reported above. The result of relationship between students' self-efficacy and students' Academic Achievement in Economics shows Pearson correlation of  $r= 0.084$ , indicating positive relationship between predictor variable (Students' Self-efficacy) and Students' achievement in Economics. However, the correlation is considered low. But, there is no significant relationship between students' self-efficacy and students' achievement in Economics at  $p< 0.05$ , as could be seen from table 3. This implies that Self- efficacy does not have significant direct relationship with students' academic achievement in Economics.

The finding is however contrary to study like Carroll et al. 2009, Shahrzad et al. 2011, and Shafiq and Rand 2015 whose findings indicated that students with high self-efficacy were more likely to have a high academic achievement. Nevertheless, the finding of this study is in line with that of Gopolang (2014) which found no significant relationships between self-efficacy and academic performance. The students' self-efficacy accounted for just a little variance observed in students' achievement in Economics, suggesting that, there are other important factors that can contribute to students' achievement, probably such as motivation, teachers factor, teaching pedagogy, aptitude, attitude and environmental factors. The finding above seems to be different from the findings from other studies that emphasized the importance of students' self-efficacy on their academic achievement. Many studies reported that someone's belief in performing a particular task helps the person to achieve greatly (which include enhancing students' academic achievement). However, the finding in this study showed that students' self-efficacy on students' academic achievement should not be over-rated. The result appear to be stressing the fact that while students' self-efficacy is

very important, it does not have a direct domineering effect on students' achievement.

Although, the respondents indicated that they believed in their capability to pass and obtain good grades but they seem to lack ability to attract high grades. These results show that self-efficacy is not significantly related to achievement in Economics.

The result of relationship between students' Mathematics proficiency and students' Achievement in Economics shows Pearson correlation of  $r=0.204$  indicating positive relationship between predictor variable (students' Mathematics proficiency) and students' achievement in Economics. However the correlation is considered low. There is significant relationship between students' Mathematics proficiency and students' achievement in Economics at  $p < 0.05$  as could be seen from table 4. This implies that Mathematics proficiency have significant direct relationship with students' achievement in Economics, that is, knowledge of student in Mathematics will definitely improve students' achievement in Economics.

The finding is in line with that of Ayotola and Adedeji (2012); Girijasankar and Sriram (2015); which ascertained that higher levels of Mathematics and Economics taken prior to university would significantly improve student performance in principle of Economics, this also indicated that prior Economics knowledge has more influence than prior mathematics knowledge on students performance in principle of Economics. However, the result indicated that students with better understanding of Mathematics perform significantly in Economics.

The result of relationship between students' English-language proficiency and students' achievement in Economics shows Pearson correlation of  $r=0.348$  indicating positive relationship between students' English-language proficiency and students' achievement in Economics. However the correlation is considered low. But there is significant relationship between English-language proficiency and students' achievement in Economics at  $p < 0.05$  as could be seen in table 4.

This result showed a direct effect of students' English Language proficiency on students' achievement in Economics. This implied that the more students are proficient in English language, the more they comprehend concepts in Economics and the more they perform well in Economics.

The finding is in line with Umaru and Ugwu (2012) which affirmed that, the chances of passing Economics with good grades depends on students' level of English language proficiency. Their result further



implies that the effect of English language proficiency in influencing the learning of concepts in Economics was significant. In addition to this, English language, being the language of the schools in Nigeria given that all academic activities such as teaching and learning are carried out in, plays significant role in the life of the schools. Therefore, every success in all academic endeavours in schools depends on it.

On relative contribution of Self-efficacy, students' Mathematics and English-Language proficiency on students' academic achievement in Economics, in which out of all the predictors only students' Mathematics proficiency ( $\beta=0.227$ ,  $t=3.790$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and students' English- language proficiency ( $\beta=0.362$ ,  $t= 6.833$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ) significantly contributed to the students' achievement in Economics showed that English-language proficiency contributed to students' achievement Economics more than Mathematics proficiency did.

So also from the multiple regression correlation coefficient, the composite contribution of the predictor variables (self-efficacy, students' Mathematics proficiency and English language proficiency) to student's achievement in Economics was 0.415, coefficient of determination was 0.172 and adjusted R square was 0.164. This implied that the predictor variables jointly accounted for 17.2% of the variance in the student's achievement in Economics and 82.8% are due to other factors not considered in this study.

## **Conclusion**

Mathematics proficiency correlates with students' academic achievement in Economics and this is because students with prior knowledge of mathematics achieve more in Economics than students with low mathematics proficiency. Similarly, the study revealed that English language proficiency is one of the determinants of students' achievement in Economics and other school subjects. Moreover, the finding that high self-efficacy of most students did not correspond with high achievement in Economics shows a gap which needs attention and action by teachers to influence students in a manner that will allow them to value academic achievement. Lack of interest in educational activities with high self-efficacy might be a barrier and as such make them not work hard in their various academic responsibilities as expected; the end result of such will be low academic achievements. Therefore, for students to have good grades they should be motivated and optimistic to get good grades while they also engage in pro-academic activities like reading and studying, among others.

## Recommendation

In the light of findings and discussions in this study, the following recommendations are therefore suggested:

- Students should make effort to improve their Mathematics and English-language ability in order to maximize their achievement in economics.
- Government should employ competent teachers in both Mathematics and English-language subjects, based on their professional skills and experiences in order to subsequently boost student learning of Economics.
- Teachers should endeavor to motivate and encourage their students for improved learning of Economics.
- Students should engage in pro-active academic exercises to boost their academic achievement.

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