SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SELF-AWARENESS AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABIA STATE.

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Abstract

The study examined the extent social capital and self-awareness predict academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies (CRS) among secondary school students in Abia State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. 439 sample of SS2 students were drawn through multistage sampling techniques from the population of 4392 SS2 students offering CRS in Abia State. Three researcher's developed instruments were used for data collection titled "Social Capital Questionnaire (SCQ), Self-awareness questionnaire (SAQ) and CRS Achievement Test (CRSAT). The instruments were validated by three experts. Cronbach's Alpha method was adopted to determine the internal consistency of the instruments which yielded reliability indices of 0.76 and 0.84 for SCQ and SAQ respectively while Kuder-Richardson (KR-21) was used for CRSAT which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.89. Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was used to answer the research questions while linear regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed that Social capital and self-awareness were significant predictors of academic achievement in CRS among students in Abia State as they predicted 76.4% and 71.2% respectively. It was thus recommended among others that students should be provided with necessary information about the different social capital and self-awareness variables and how they could relate with school guidance counsellor for effective learning outcomes.

Key words: Social capital, self-control, self-awareness, academic achievement, Christian Religious Studies.

Introduction

Christian Religious Education aims to restore humanity's divine image by integrating moral values and character development, reflecting the character of God (Abolarinl & Toyin, 2020). Oluwakemi (2022) describes Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic discipline that investigates Christian beliefs, values and institutions grounded in biblical scholarship and historical context. Christian Religious Studies was defined by Obanya in Njoku (2015) as a social science subject that equips students with moral values, fear of God, and essential skills, enabling them to make meaningful contributions to socio-economic development. In the context of this study, Christian Religious Studies is the study of Christian values aimed at promoting and sustaining our relationship with God and for peaceful co-existence with fellow human beings. Christian Religious Studies, a core subject in Nigerian secondary schools, focuses on nurturing the moral, intellectual and spiritual growth of individuals.

According to the Universal Basic Education (UBE, 2013:34) the primary goals of CRS include; enhancing youths' understanding of God and fostering faith development, cultivating Christian values such as humility, respect, love and justice; promoting tolerance, reconciliation, peaceful co-existence and non-violence as well as instilling respect for human life and dignity. Akubue (2015) emphasizes that CRS equips learners with essential skills through the integration of Christian principles and values. This subject encourages students to engage in reflective thinking, critical evaluation and effective communication on matters of faith, morality and reality. This means that CRS affects every aspect of a nation including politics, education, economy, morality and relationship. It is a system of education in which religious tenets are incorporated into curriculum and ethos of an educational institution.

Despite the relevance of Christian Religious Studies in training the students morally and instilling in them the desire to be good and virtuous, there has been increase in the cases of armed robbery, kidnapping and banditry in the country which are evidences of decline in

religious principle of honesty, prudence, humility, integrity, industry, frugality, punctuality, justice in business, which could create freedom from fear of cheats and dupes and offers a peaceful state for commercial progress. There have also been persistent poor exhibition of interests and achievements in Christian Religious Studies in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) in Abia State. Okoye (2018) explained interest as a kind of feeling which one has for something which is valuable and beneficial. Interest is therefore a necessary ingredient before learning can take place; for a child is bound to pay attention as a lesson goes on if such a child is interested in the particular subject. However, studies carried out in Nigeria have revealed high failure rate and relatively small proportion of students' interest in Christian Religious Studies (Altieri, 2020). It is believed that the achievement of students in Christian Religious Studies could improve if students develop interest in the subject (Uyehara, 2022).

Achievement is a success in a task or undertaking while academic achievement is a learning outcome of a child, specifically the level of performance exhibited in a learning task (Scott, 2012). This includes knowledge, skills and ideas acquired and trained through the course of the study within and outside classroom situation. This could be quantified by measuring a child's academic standing in relation to those of other children of the child's age. In the context of this study, academic achievement in CRS is defined as students' academic performance, progress and accomplishments in the subject within a formal learning environment. In this study, low achieving students in CRS are those students who consistently perform below 50 percent (Adelakun, 2018). Analysis of West African Examinations Councils' (WAEC) Chief Examiners' Reports from 2018-2022 shows a concerning pattern of low achievement in CRS, with credit rates fluctuating between 44.18%, and 51.7%. These uninspiring interest and poor achievements in Christian Religious Studies in the SSCE examinations are causes for concern

and this is a major problem that should be addressed through the study of CRS by young Nigerians such as secondary school students.

Literature reports tend to suggest that social capital and self-awareness have the potentials for predicting the academic achievement of students (Plagens in Mutawally, 2018; Drew, 2022). Social capital refers to the network of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society enabling that society to function effectively. It stems from social relations and social norms that are as a result of relationships among individuals within a network (Plagens in Mutawally, 2018). As defined by Kenton and James (2022) social capital refers to the framework of shared values and resources that align multiple individuals to cooperatively achieve common goals. David (2020) identified three major components and levels of analysis of social capital to be; networks, norms and sanctions.

In the context of this study, networks refer to the connections and relationships that individuals or groups have with others within a community or society. The size, diversity and quality of networks may influence the access to resources, information and opportunities. Some networks may be more tightly knit, characterized by strong social ties and close relationships. Other networks may be more loosely connected, with weaker ties and less frequent interaction. Social networks provide the basis for the development of social capital. They facilitate the flow of information, resources and support among individuals or groups within a community. David (2020) argued that these networks enable people to establish and maintain social ties, engage in social interactions and access opportunities and resources that are embedded within the networks. However, networks in social capital formed through relationships and connections may predict academic achievement by providing access to resources like study groups, mentorship and information sharing. More so, exposure to diverse perspectives through social networks can stimulate critical thinking and innovation, positively impacting performance. Research by Tanzin and Susanne (2018) showed a substantial correlation between social

networking and academic outcomes. Similarly, Felix, Isaac and Eric (2018) found a significant correlation between social networking sites and students engagement in higher education. However, Yang and Tang (2013) discovered no significant correlation between friendship networks and academic performance.

Self-control refers to the process of overriding impulsive responses and adapting behaviour to conform to social standards (Baumeister, Scheichel& Vons in Song, 2018). Cherry (2022) defined self-control as a regulatory mechanism enabling individuals to suppress undesirable impulses, cultivate desirable habits and pursue long term goals. Self-awareness allows individuals to reflect on their experiences, evaluate their behaviour and make judgments about themselves. Self-awareness could be defined as the ability to introspectively examine one's own thoughts, emotions and actions recognizing their alignment with one's standards. Thus being self-aware is all about having an understanding of one's own thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs and actions (Duval & Wicklund in Betz, 2022). In the context of this study, self-awareness is defined as one's knowledge about himself, his ability, weakness and strength. Self-awareness could be an essential element in understanding and enhancing academic achievement. Olusegun, Scholastica and Modupe (2022) reported that self-awareness had significant relationship with task performance. Also, a study by Isti, Muhammad and Chici (2021) discovered that academic self-awareness and self-regulation significantly correlate academic burnout. Sahar, Masumah, Nazbanoo and Azizreza (2014) reported that there existed a statistically significant relationship between the self-awareness training and aggression reduction. In addition, self-awareness training and promotion of educational achievement motivation were significantly related.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent social capital and self-awareness serve as predictors of academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students in Abia State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent social capital predict students' academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies in Abia State

5. Ascertain the extent self-awareness serves as predictor of students' academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies in Abia state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study

1. To what extent does social capital predict the academic achievement of secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies in Abia State?

2. What is the extent self-awareness predicts academic achievement of Secondary school students in CRS?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance to further guide this study.

HO₁: Social capital is not a significant predictor of academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students in Abia State.

HO₂: Self-awareness does not significantly predict students' academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent does social capital predict the academic achievement of secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies in Abia State?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Social Capital and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Christian Religious Studies

Source		NSC	AACRS
SC	Pearson correlations	1	.874
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	437	437
AACRS	Pearson correlations	0.874	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.000	
	N	437	437
	R^2	.764	

SC = Social Capital, AACRS =Academic Achievement in Christian Religious Studies, N = Number of respondents * Correlation Significant at 0.05 level.

Data in Table 1 indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of .874 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of ± 0.81- 1.00. This indicates that social capital to a very high and positive extent predicted academic achievement of Secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies in Abia State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) .764 indicates that 76.4% of the variance observed in academic achievement of Secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies in Abia State was accounted for by social capital. Consequently, social capital predicted 76.4% of academic achievement of Secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies in Abia State

A corresponding hypothesis formulated to further guide the study is:

Hypothesis One: Social capital is not a significant predictor of academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students in Abia State.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Social Capital and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Christian Religious Studies

Variables	Term	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F cal	Sig	Decision

Social Capital and Academic Achievement	Regression	1812.473	1	1812.473			
	Residual	4223.232	436	9.686	187.123	.000	S
	Total	6035.705	437				

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The data in the Table 2 showed that social capital significantly predicted academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students. The calculated f-value of 187.123 in respect of the relationship between social capital and academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students is greater than f-critical value of 1.96 with degree of freedom of 1 and 436 at 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between social capital and academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students was rejected. Consequently, social capital significantly predicted academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students.

Research Question 2

What is the extent self-awareness in self-control predicts academic achievement of Secondary school students in CRS?

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Self-Awareness and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in CRS

Source		SASC	AACRS
SA	Pearson correlations	1	.844
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	437	437
AACRS	Pearson correlations	0.844	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.000	
	N	437	437
	R^2	.712	

SA= Self-awareness, AACRS =Academic Achievement in Christian Religious Studies, N = Number of respondents * Correlation Significant at 0.05 level.

Data in Table 2 indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of .844 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of $\pm$ 0.81- 1.00. This indicates that self-awareness to a very high and positive extent predicted academic achievement of Secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies. The coefficient of determination (R^2) .712 indicates that 71.2% of the variance observed in academic achievement of Secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies State was accounted for by self-awareness in self-control. Therefore, self-awareness predicted 71.2% of academic achievement of secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies.

Hypothesis 2: Self-awareness does not significantly predict students' academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Self-awareness and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Christian Religious Studies

Variables	Term	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F – cal	Sig	Decision
Self-awareness and Academic Achievement	Regression	1822.463	1	1822.463			
	Residual	4233.233	436	9.709	187.709	.000	S
	Total	6055.696	437				

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The data in the Table 4.3 indicated that self-awareness significantly predicted academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students. The calculated f-value of 187.709 in respect of the relationship between Self-awareness and academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students is greater than f-critical value of 1.96 with degree of freedom of 1 and 436 at 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between Self-awareness and

academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students was rejected. Therefore, self-awareness significantly predicted academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study were discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study

Social Capital and academic achievement

The findings of this study revealed that social capital played a substantial role in predicting academic success in CRS among Abia State secondary school students. Specifically, the findings showed that social capital predicted 76.4% of the variance in academic achievement, confirming its significance as a predictor of academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students in Abia State. The findings of this study are in line with some earlier studies by Tanzin and Susanne (2018), Felix, Isaac and Eric (2018). The study by Tanzin and Susanne (2018) explored the link between social networking and academic performance and it showed that there was a significant relationship. Similarly, the study by Felix, Isaac and Eric (2018) investigated on social networking sites' impact on students' engagement in higher education. Thus, the findings of the study showed a substantial correlation between social networking sites and students' engagement in higher education. However, the findings of the present study slightly disagreed with Yang and Tang (2013) study on social networks effects on students' performance in Taiwanese online education. Their research revealed that advising network variables are positively impacted to students' performance both in the classroom and online settings, while adversarial variables negatively correlated students' performance. Notably, Yang and Tang found out that advising and adversarial network variables predicted overall academic performance; but adversarial network

variables had no influence on online forum performance. Conversely, friendship network variables did not significantly impact students' performance.

Self-awareness and Academic Achievement

The findings of this study revealed that self-awareness was found to be a substantial predictor of academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies as it predicted 71.2% of the variance in academic achievement of Secondary school students in Abia State.

Olusegun, Scholastica and Modupe (2022) reported that self-awareness had significant relationship with task performance. Also, study by Isti, Muhammad and Chici (2021) identified a significant correlation between academic self-awareness, self-regulation and academic burnout. Sahar, Masumah, Nazbanoo and Azizreza (2014) reported that there existed a statistically significant relationship between the self-awareness training and aggression reduction. In addition, self-awareness training and promotion of educational achievement motivation were significantly related.

The findings of this study support the findings of the study by Olusegun, Scholastica and Modupe (2022) on the relationship between self-awareness and task performance among academic staff in selected private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study identified that a strong positive correlation exist between self-awareness and task performance (r (296) = 0.833, p < 0.05). However, these results contrast with the findings of Isti, Muhammad and Chici (2021) which reported a significant negative correlations between academic self-awareness and *academic burn out* (r= -0.75, p < 0.001), self-regulation and academic burn out (r = -0.519, p < 0.001), and a positive correlation between academic self-awareness, self-regulation and academic burnout (r = 0.411, p <0,001) among UNY students.

Conclusion

The study's findings led to the following key conclusions:

A substantial relationship exists between social capital and academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies among secondary school students, with social capital predicting over three quarters (76.4%) of the variation in student's academic achievement.

Self-awareness plays a significant role in predicting students' academic achievement in Christian Religious Studies as it predicted 71.2% of academic achievement of variance among secondary school students.

Recommendations

1   Teachers should provide students with necessary information about the different social capital and self-awareness variables and how they could relate with school guidance counsellor for effective learning outcomes

2   The government and educational planners should provide teachers with information and materials that may assist them to unravel each student's social capital and self-awareness needs that may require individualized attention and effective teaching that could lead to better learning outcomes.

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