



The Impact Of Resilience On Students' Academic Achievement: Case Study Of Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study was aimed at finding out the impact of resilience on students' academic achievement. The researcher was motivated by the students' effort to succeed despite the prevailing challenges and barriers affecting them especially in their academics. The survey research design was adopted for this study. A questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The simple random sampling technique was used. The questionnaire was administered to 80 students. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the results presented on tables for the descriptive statistics and the chi-square for inferential statistics. Findings revealed that there is a high significant relationship between resilience and academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp. Recommendations were made on how to improve on their academic achievement given their prevailing circumstances and make them to be more resilient in the face of numerous challenges affecting them in any environment they find themselves.

Keywords: Resilience, self-efficacy; self-management; Adaptive skills; Relationship

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, research on human resilience has taken into account a wide range of difficulties and adaptive behaviours which contains a range of relevant insights into resilience in children and adolescents. In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate the psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2005). There is a positive relationship between resilience and academic success (Wagnlid & Collins, 2009). Academic achievement is a very complex variable and many variables influence it. Academic

The Impact of Resilience on Students' Academic Achievement: A Case Study of Secondary School Students in Minawao Refugee Camp Far North Region of Cameroon

achievement is seen through the learners' performances in test, assignments, exam in class and in certificate examinations. Resilience has been widely adopted to signify the capacity to cope, learn and thrive in the face of change, challenge or adversity Benard (2007).

In education, educational resilience refers to the capacity to succeed in school despite exposure to personal and environmental adversities (Wang & Gordon, 1994). Being resilient helps to promote social and emotional wellbeing. Everyone encounters challenges and everyone has a degree of resilience, however some children and young people are more resilient than others. Those with high resilience are more likely to thrive in learning which will improve their academic performance and less likely to suffer from social or psychological health problems (Benard, 2004).

Resilient students are described by Alva (1991) as those who maintain high motivational achievement and performance even when faced with stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of poor performance and by Waxman et al. (2003) as those who succeed at school despite the presence of adverse conditions. Student Research on educational resilience is limited and generally has focused on identifying the individual characteristics of resilient students who thrive academically in the face of adversity. These characteristics include a wide array of optimism, internal affirmation, internal locus of control, intrinsic motivation, assertiveness, the ability to solve problems; perceived social support, and having goals and aspirations to name a few (Ungar, 2015).

Accordingly, researchers and educators have sought to identify these character traits in order to foster its development in students placed at risk of school failure. However, a more meaningful conception views resilience not as a fixed attribute, but rather, the result of a combination of character traits and external protective factors. In other words, what makes a student "resilient" is the relative strength of individual characteristics and external protective processes (e.g., supports provided by families, schools, and communities) compared to the influence of risks and vulnerabilities (e.g., low socioeconomic status, inadequate resources, and fragmented services, low teacher expectations, and so forth) in the external environment. Resilience is established via a dynamic balance between two intrinsic properties: risk and protective factors (Rutter, 1990). As their names suggest, factors associated with each group, work either to inhibit or promote healthy adaptation to adverse circumstances. While research has focused primarily on illuminating risk factors associated with academic failure, an understanding of protective factors is equally important for elucidating the reasons some students succeed in school despite the presence of adversity (Greene & Conrad, 2002). Resilience only occurs when individuals experience some type of risk or adversity. Children may be called competent, well adjusted, or normal, but they are not considered resilient until they deal with a significant risk and demonstrate the ability to overcome it (Masten & Reed, 2002).

Based on the observation of the researcher, the Far North Region of Cameroon, the North Eastern part of Nigeria, Chad and even Niger which have been affected by the Boko haram insurgency which resulted in many displaced individuals. It is in line with this problem, that the Government of Cameroon and other international donors created the Minawao refugee camp to protect and provide shelter to displaced individuals. With the efforts of the Government of Cameroon and international partners in helping these individuals, their conditions especially secondary school students in the camp is a challenging one. With the total absence of guidance and counselling service and other referral services, high rate of absenteeism among these students and lack of parent-teacher relationship among other things, have affected their academic achievement. Equally, considering their background, there is massive self-promotion among these students coupled with the lack of electricity and other basic stationary necessary for basic learning, has equally added fuel to the problem. It is under these harsh conditions that some of these students still succeed in schools and in National exams such as the Cameroon General Certificate Education (G.C.E) and also still thrived well in competent areas with regards their academics and social life.

It is based on this existing problem that the researcher is trying to make an effort to understand such responses to adversity and seek to find out how these students still succeed with focus on their academic achievement despite the prevailing barriers. After careful observation, the researcher got interested and felt the need for this study. Based on this facts, the researcher decided to find out the impact of resilience on students' academic achievement among secondary students in the Minawao refugee camp in the Far North region of Cameroon. Specifically, the study was geared towards; (1) Finding out whether the self-efficacy of secondary school students influences their academic achievement (2) Examining whether self-management of secondary school students influences their academic achievement (3) verifying whether the level of relationship among secondary school students influences their academic achievement (4) Determining how adaptive skills among secondary school students influence their academic achievement.

Martin and Marsh (2006) reported self-efficacy, planning, persistence, anxiety, and uncertain control as predictors of academic resilience. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is defined as an individual' beliefs about their own ability to successfully engage in a task in order to obtain a desired outcome. Self-efficacy is important because individuals with high self-efficacy for a task tend to try harder at the task and experience more positive emotions relating to the task (Bandura, 1997). People with low self-efficacy expect failure; consequently, they avoid challenges and typically give up on the task found difficult.

The Impact of Resilience on Students' Academic Achievement: A Case Study of Secondary School Students in Minawao Refugee Camp Far North Region of Cameroon

A good and supportive relationship is needed to create safe environments and give students confidence to work without pressure and become motivated to learn. Specifically, when students are exposed to positive emotional stimuli, they are able to recall newly learned information better (Nielson & Lorber, 2009). Vanzetti and Duck (1996) shared a similar view as well as other benefits to relationships, which include physical support, a sense of belonging, having a "sounding board" for emotional reactions and opinions, being able to say what you really think, providing assurance of worth, opportunities to help others, and validation and support for the way we do things and interpret experience .

Adaptive skills are often described as a set of behaviors or constellation of skills that allow for an individual to function independently and meet environmental demands (Harrison & Oakland, 2003). In children, the development of adaptive skills allows them to learn and apply life skills to such environments as school, home, and community. Examples of such skills include domestic skills (e.g., sorting laundry, dishwashing, meal preparation); self-care (e.g., grooming, hygiene, and dressing); and community skills (e.g., appropriate greetings, recognition of danger, and helping others). Every human being must learn a set of skills that is beneficial for the environments and communities they find themselves in.

Lorig (1993) defined self-management as "learning and practicing skills necessary to carry on an active and emotionally satisfying life in the face of a chronic condition. Self-Management is one of the five social-emotional areas of learning identified by the Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Self-management refers to the ability of an individual to regulate their emotions and resulting behaviors in ways that society considers acceptable. This includes how the individual copes with unmet wants or needs, perseveres when faced with obstacles, and sets goals for himself/herself (Bandy & Moore, 2010). Appropriate self-management can help students perform better in school and improving their academic achievement by reducing delinquent behaviors, and can help individuals perform better on the school activities. It is based on these facts that the researcher decided to find out the impact of resilience on students' academic achievement among secondary students in the Minawao refugee camp in the Far North Region of Cameroon.

METHODS

The method used in this study was the quantitative method. Quantitative research involves the collection of data so that information can be quantified and subjected to statistical treatment to support or refute alternative knowledge claim (Leedy & Ormrod 2001; Williams, 2011). The survey research design was used. It consists of studying groups of people or things by collecting and analyzing data from a sample considered being representative of the population of interest

(Nworgu, 1991). The target population for the study was made up of Form One to Form Five secondary students in the Minawao refugee camp located in the Mayo Tsanaga Divisional of the Far North Region of Cameroon. The students in these classes were chosen because the researchers considered that these students are all exposed to challenges and adversities which influence their academic achievement.

The simple random sampling technique was used. This technique ensures that there is no bias since all the students have an equal chance of being selected. This was done for all the classes. A sample population of 80 students was chosen for the study. A self-developed questionnaire items based on a modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used. This instrument was specially designed for students and was made up of items relating to the variables under investigation. The items in the questionnaire were constructed in conformity with the indicators as well as the research questions and hypotheses. The anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed in order to get honest and truthful responses. The collected data were analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. Descriptively using frequencies, percentages and mean opinions to establish the trends in respondents' opinion. Inferentially using the chi-square (χ^2) test of independence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to examine the impact of resilience on students' academic achievement with specific focus on secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp in the Far North region of Cameroon. The collected data were analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. Descriptively, using frequencies, percentages and mean opinions to establish the trends in respondents' opinion. Inferentially, using the chi-square (χ^2) test of independence. The summary of the analyses of the research data collected is shown below;

Based on findings, 71.42% of the respondents accepted that self-efficacy significantly influences students' academic achievement. While 28.58% disagreed that self-efficacy significantly influences students' academic achievement. Inferential analysis using the chi-square test has proven that chi square (χ^2) calculated value is 192.93 which is greater than the critical value 54.57 thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. Therefore, self-efficacy has a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp in the Far North region of Cameroon.

Based on the findings, 74.52% of the respondents accepted that self-management significantly influence students' academic achievement. While 25.48% disagreed that self-management significantly influences students' academic achievement. Inferential analysis using the chi-square test has proven chi square (χ^2) calculated value is 856.55 which is greater

The Impact of Resilience on Students' Academic Achievement: A Case Study of Secondary School Students in Minawao Refugee Camp Far North Region of Cameroon

than the critical value 58.12 thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. Therefore, self-management has a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school student in Minawao refugee camp.

Based on the findings, 74.52 of the respondents accepted that relationship significantly influences students' academic achievement. While 25.48% disagreed that relationship significantly influences students' academic achievement. Inferential analysis using the chi-square test has proven that chi square (χ^2) calculated value is 838.95 which is greater than the critical value 54.57 thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. Therefore, relationship has a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school student in Minawao refugee camp

Based on the findings, 56.87% of the respondents accepted that adaptive skills significantly influence students' academic achievement. While 43.13% disagreed that adaptive skills significantly influences students' academic achievement. Inferential analysis using the chi-square test has proven that chi square (χ^2) calculated value is 736.62 which is greater than the critical value 58.12 thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. Therefore, adaptive skills significantly influence the academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp.

CONCLUSION

This study was designed to find out the impact of resilience on students' academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp in the Far North region of Cameroon. Four research hypotheses were formulated and analyzed using the chi-square (χ^2) test statistics. The statistical analyses of the data collected using the chi-square statistical test, revealed the following findings at 0.05 level of significance with different degree of freedom: (1) Self efficacy has a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp. (2) Self-management has a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp. (3) Relationship has a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp. (4) Adaptive skills has a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between resilience and students' academic achievement of secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp in the Far North region of Cameroon. School counsellors and teachers should therefore endeavour to provide holistic approaches in handling learners in the face of adversities and challenges which will enable them to better understand their environment and its challenges.

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The Impact of Resilience on Students' Academic Achievement: A Case Study of Secondary School Students in Minawao Refugee Camp Far North Region of Cameroon

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