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## Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Delta North Senatorial District

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study examined the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. This study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 16,473 Senior Secondary School Three (SSS 3) in government-owned secondary schools in Delta North Senatorial District. The sample of the study comprised 1,647 secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District, which represents 10% of the total population. A multistage sampling procedure was used in the sampling. A questionnaire and students' past result were used for data collection in this study. The face validity of the questionnaire was examined through experts' judgment while factor analysis was used to estimate its content and construct validities. The reliability was tested by using Cronbach alpha for estimating the internal consistency of the instrument. It yielded a coefficient of 0.69 for Academic self-efficacy Rating Scale. The data obtained were analysed with Pearson's product moment correlation and coefficient of determination for the research questions and Regression statistics was used to test for the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students; that there was a significant relationship between sex and academic performance of secondary school students; and that there is was significant relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students. The study recommended amongst others, that schools should implement programmes that enhance students' academic self-efficacy through mentorship, goal-setting workshops, and positive reinforcement strategies.*

**Keywords:** academic self-efficacy; academic performance; gender, school location; secondary school students

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### INTRODUCTION

Education appears to be the largest industry Nigeria. In this regard, Government continues to ensure that funds, instructional material and teaching personnel are made available for the education sector.

Government has also continuously encouraged secondary education by adopting the social demand approach towards planning the sector and by subsidizing the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) fee in the State over a long period of time. Education appears to be the largest industry in Nigeria. In this regard, Government continues to ensure that funds, instructional material and teaching personnel are made available for the education sector. Government has also continuously encouraged secondary education by adopting the social demand approach towards planning the sector and by subsidizing the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) fee in the State over a long period of time. These are indications that government is interested in the welfare of citizens and residents of the state. Efforts therefore have been made towards ensuring that citizens have equal educational opportunities as well as making other training facilities readily accessible to the users so as to improve students' academic performance in both internal and external examinations.

Despite the above efforts of the government, it has been observed that all seem not to be well with the system as a result of the poor performance of students recorded in public examinations in the recent years. The persistent poor performance of secondary school students in public examinations such as the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) and West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) in the State in recent times has made the development of secondary education a difficult task. The academic performance of students in the WAEC between 2013 and 2014 is proven evidence to attest to this argument. The percentage of learners who passed with at least 5 credit passes and above including English and Mathematics between the same years was about 38.81% in Nigeria (Omodan, et al., 2018). This shows a systematic decline in the outputs of external examination in Nigeria because in 2012, 30.9% of the entire candidates who sat for the same examination obtained credit level passes in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics while in 2011 only 22.34% of the 1,160,561 candidates passed with at least 5 credit and above in English Language and 25.14% in Mathematics in the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (Omodan, et al., 2018).

A 5-credit pass, including Mathematics and English, was earned by less than 40% of the total number of students who registered and took the tests, according to the WAEC Chief Examiner's Report for 2018. However, the report from 2017 reveals that just 59.22% of all candidates passed with 5 credits, including English and mathematics.

According to statistical reports from the West African Examination Council, 1,003,668 applicants, or 65.24% of the 1,538,445 pupils who took the 2020 WASSCE exam, achieved at least a credit pass in five disciplines, including English and mathematics (WAEC, 2020). According to the 2021 WAEC GCE examiners' report, a total of 51,444 candidates, out of 52,973 registered candidates, took the November/December examination. Of these, only 25,008 candidates, or 48.61 percent, received credits or higher in at least five (5) subjects, including English Language and Mathematics. Of these candidates, 12,272 were boys and 12,736 were girls. According to the chief examiner's report from the same year (2021), out of a total of 1,560,261 candidates who took the exam, 1,398,370 candidates, or 89.62%, received credit or higher in a minimum of five subjects (including English Language and/or mathematics but not exclusively); while 1,274,784 candidates, or 81.7%, received credit or higher in a minimum of five subjects, including English Language and mathematics. Although the outcomes appear to be getting better each year, there is still a lot to be desired.

In addition to the WAEC results, the 2021 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, or UTME, administered by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, or JAMB, revealed low performance by the students, with just 168,613 of the 400 possible points being earned by those who scored above 200. A review of the paper the Board released following its policy meeting in Abuja revealed that the performance was a far cry from the 404,740 students who out of the 1.9 million who took the exam in 2020 scored higher than 200. 2.11 million people applied for admission to higher institutions in Nigeria in 2020, including over 300,000 who applied directly and did not need to complete the UTME. In 2021, 1,428,208 people applied, and more than 300,000 of them were direct entry applicants. According to JAMB's analysis of candidate performance in 2021, 90,688 candidates scored between 180 and 189 marks, 168,613 candidates scored between 190 and 200, and 64,323 candidates got between 190 and 199. Additional students include 149,421 with a score between 160 and 169 and 117,970 with a score between 170 and 179. 369,023 applicants earned between 140 and 159 points, while 170,816 received between 130 and 139 points.

Parents, guardians and other stakeholders in education industry have variously commented on the performances of secondary school students particularly in English Language and Mathematics. Over the years, many Nigerians have been aware of, and have been complaining about the mass failure of students in Nigerian secondary schools. This is so because nobody has been able to specifically unravel the reason or reasons for the mass failure. Igbokwe, et al. (2023) are of the view that it could be traced to lack of qualified professional and dedicated teachers. Others think that it could be traced to poor teaching facilities, poor working conditions of teachers, poor teaching and learning environments. Others blame the students for lack of interest in learning, instead diverting to trading and other sundry wealth pursuit. While some individuals criticize the absence of discipline among students, particularly in public schools, this study will shift its attention towards examining the influence of academic self-efficacy on students' academic performance.

Academic self-efficacy is one of the factors, which plays a significant role in the academic world of a student. Academic self-efficacy motivates the student to adopt specific and appropriate learning strategies to achieve academic goals. The concept of academic self-efficacy traces its root in the Social Cognitive Learning Theory of Albert Bandura. Academic self-efficacy, in the words of Bandura (1986), is "the belief of an individual in his/her ability to take action by expectations". Academic self-efficacy is not related to the question of how much an individual likes himself or herself? It is also not concerned with what abilities or capacities a person possesses? It is related to the question of how an individual holds the belief in his/her ability to perform any course of action or assigned task?

According to social cognitive theory, an individual acquires self-knowledge of their efficacy or ability through four sources. Situational academic self-efficacy has the following four components. Mastery Experience implies that to become a success in any task or to control an environment mastery experience increases academic self-efficacy. It is related to the experience that helps the individual to perform well in a similarly associated task. Vicarious experience implies observing the action of someone's attainment in a related task. Emotional and psychological states refer to the sensation of emotional and psychological aspects (like depression, tension, anxiety, etc.) which are experienced by a person while performing a particular task. Verbal Persuasion refers to people's faith and feedback to strengthen the belief of an individual in his ability to become a success. It means that the academic

self-efficacy of a person or student is also influenced by discouragement and encouragement from others.

Academic self-efficacy is considered as a key factor contributing to learner academic performance as it affects the choices and decisions that learners make and the courses of action they pursue (Pajares, 2012). Students' beliefs in their efficacy in an academic environment, provide the foundation for motivation, and personal achievement. It is because students have little incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficult circumstances unless they believe that their actions will result in the outcomes they deserve. In addition, students with a strong belief in their academic efficacy are more interested in academic activities by setting up challenging goals and working hard to achieve them (Fenollar et al., 2017). It can be shown in the behaviour of the students who have higher efficacy belief that they can demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm while working on the tasks, such as collecting assigned assignments on time, never complaining while an assignment is provided, and always attempting to complete the tasks despite the high level of difficulty. Meanwhile, others with lower academic self-efficacy often seem to choose and perform well on tasks that match their abilities, however, if the tasks are perceived to be too challenging, they avoid and ignore them which creates the problem of academic procrastination (Bandura, 2003). Students get information for evaluating their academic self-efficacy from their actual performances, vicarious experiences, persuasions from others, and physiological reactions related to the academic environment. It affects their task choice, effort, persistence, resilience, and achievement.

In the relationship that may exists between academic self-efficacy and academic performance, the researchers believes that sex and location could moderate the relationships. Sex is one of such factors also mentioned in literature to have considerable effects on students' academic performances. It is the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioural characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between the feminine and masculine population. The importance of examining performance in relation to sex is based primarily on the socio-cultural differences between girls and boys. Some vocations and professions have been regarded as men's (engineering, arts and crafts, agriculture etc.) while others as women's (catering, typing, nursing etc.). On the other hand, chores like dishes washing, cooking, cleaning and so on is assigned to the girls. In a nutshell, what are regarded as complex and difficult tasks are allocated to boys whereas girls are expected to handle the relatively easy and less demanding tasks. As a result of this way of thinking the larger society has tended to see girls as a weaker sex. Hence, the need to find out the moderating impact of sex on the relationship that may exists among academic self-efficacy, social media, class size and academic performance of secondary school students.

In addition to sex, school location can also moderate the relationship that could exists between academic self-efficacy and academic performance; between social media and academic performance; and between class size and academic performance. School location is the thread that connects the multitude of activities on the school. In many respects, this thread is almost invisible, yet everyone experiences its effect. It is the external effects in the school that can affect academic performance of students irrespective of their intelligent quotient. School location can also be considered as the second teacher since space has the power to organize and promote pleasant relationships between people of different ages, to provide changes, to promote choices and activities and for its potential for sparking

different types of social and affective learning. It has been generally accepted that location and heredity can hardly be separated from education in influencing performance, hence a child's life and ability is affected by nature and nurture. Heredity provides the natural disposition while a healthy location makes available a window of opportunities to the learner. The location variable of the setting helps to a large extent in ensuring attainability of the goals of such setting. The location differences and the differences in the quality of instruction from schools in urban areas to schools in rural areas can create differences in the level of knowledge acquisition of the students. This shows that the learning facilities children are exposed to and the socio-economic effect on them can affect their academic performance. Hence, the need to find out the moderating impact of school location on the relationship that may exist among academic self-efficacy, social media, class size and academic performance of secondary school students.

In view of the above, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District?
2. What is the relationship between sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District?
3. What is the relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District
2. There is no significant relationship between sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District
3. There is no significant relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

### **METHODS**

This study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all government-owned Senior Secondary School Three (SSS 3) students in Delta North Senatorial District. There are 159 public secondary schools and a total of 16,473 Senior Secondary School Three (SSS 3) students in the nine Local Government Areas of Delta North Senatorial District. The sample of the study comprised 1,647 secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District, which represents 10% of the total population. The choice of 10% is in line with Gill, et al. (2010), who recommended that a sample of 10% of a population is acceptable for very large sample. The researchers selected schools in each of the nine local government areas in Delta North Senatorial District in the first stage using a simple random sampling technique. He wrote the names of all the schools in each of the nine Local Government Areas on a sheet of paper, folded it, and placed it in a



basket. Then, he shuffled the basket and pulled out three pieces of paper, revealing what was written on them, which determined the chosen schools. This process continued until three schools from each of the nine Local Government Areas in Delta North Senatorial District are selected, resulting in a total of 27 schools. In the second stage, the researchers chose 61 students from each of the 27 schools selected, and this was accomplished through the use of a proportionate sampling technique. When selecting individuals based on their sex, the researchers utilized a stratified sampling technique to divide the students into male and female students.

A questionnaire and students' past result were used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire contains two sections, namely sections A and B. Section A contains respondent demographics such as location and sex while Section B contains Academic self-efficacy Rating Scale (SERS). The Academic self-efficacy Rating Scale was adapted and modified from the short form of the General Academic self-efficacy Scale, developed by Gafoor and Ashraf (2006). It contains 32 items, which is designed to assess optimistic self-beliefs to cope with a variety of difficult demands in life. The items were however reduced to 12 after validation. It was structured on a 4-point rating scale, ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 4 for strongly agree. The overall score of the students in the first term examination was collected from the school and computed to account for their academic performance score.

The instrument was given to experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling for the purpose of vetting. Some of the items were modified to reflect the views of students on the various rating scales. The face validity of the instrument was considered by the three lecturers who are experts. For content and construct validity of the instrument, factor analysis was used. A total of 50 copies of the questionnaire were printed and administered on 50 students in Abraka, which is not part of the study area. The data obtained were subjected to a factor analysis. The principal component analysis was used to estimate the content validity. It yielded a total cumulative variance of 70.31% for Academic self-efficacy Rating Scale. The construct validity estimated using the rotated factor loading matrixes. It yielded a the score of 0.65-0.86 for Academic self-efficacy Rating Scale. The reliability of the instrument was established by using Cronbach alpha for estimating the internal consistency of the instrument. A total of 50 copies of the questionnaire was printed and administered on 50 students in Abraka, which is not part of the study area. The data obtained were subjected to a reliability test using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. It yielded a coefficient of 0.69 for Academic self-efficacy Rating Scale.

The questionnaire was administered directly to the respondents by the researchers with the help of three research Assistants. The researchers were on ground throughout the period. The questionnaire was retrieved immediately. At the end of the exercise, a total of 1,647 copies of questionnaire were administered and a total of 1,327 were retrieved, indicating 80.57% retrieval rate. The data obtained were analysed with Pearson's product moment correlation and coefficient of determination for the research questions. Regression statistics was used to test for the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULT

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District?

**Table 1:** Pearson's correlation and coefficient of determination on academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup> %	Remark
Academic Self-Efficacy Academic Performance	1327	0.09	0.01	1	Positive Relationship

As shown in table 1, a Pearson's correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination were used to determine the nature of the relationship that exists between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The result revealed a positive relationship between the two variables ( $r = 0.09$ ;  $r^2 = 0.01$ ;  $r^2\% = 0.1$ ). The result further showed that academic self-efficacy contributed 1% to the variability in academic performance of secondary school students.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District?

**Table 2:** Pearson's correlation and coefficient of determination on sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup> %	Remark
Sex Academic Performance	1327	0.10	0.01	1	Positive Relationship

As shown in table 2, a Pearson's correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination were used to determine the nature of the relationship that exists between sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The result revealed a positive relationship between the two variables ( $r = 0.10$ ;  $r^2 = 0.01$ ;  $r^2\% = 1$ ). The result further showed that sex contributed 1% to the variability in academic performance of secondary school students.

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District?

**Table 3:** Pearson's correlation and coefficient of determination on school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

Variables	N	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup> %	Remark
School Location	1327	0.12	0.01	1	Positive Relationship
Academic Performance					

As shown in table 3, a Pearson's correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination were used to determine the nature of the relationship that exists between school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The result revealed a positive relationship between the two variables ( $r = 0.12$ ;  $r^2 = 0.01$ ;  $r^2\% = 1$ ). The result further showed that school location contributed 1% to the variability in academic performance of secondary school students.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

**Table 4:** Regression analysis on academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	3080.835	1	3080.835	11.560	.001 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	353137.341	1325	266.519		
Total	356218.176	1326			

  

Variables in Equation					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient B	Standardized Coefficient Beta	t	Sig	
(Constant)	42.841			21.075	.000
Academic Self-Efficacy	.198	.093		3.400	.001

$\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $R = 0.09$ ,  $R\text{-Square} = 0.01$

- Dependent Variable:** Academic Performance
- Predictors (Constant):** Academic Self-Efficacy

As shown in table 4, a linear regression statistics was used to determine the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The result revealed a significant positive relationship between the two variables,  $F(1, 1326) = 11.560$   $p < 0.05$  level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, which means that there is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The beta value of 0.09 showed that academic self-efficacy contributed 1% to the variability in academic performance of secondary school students.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District



**Table 5:** Regression analysis on sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	3731.307	1	3731.307	14.028	.000 <sup>p</sup>
Residual	348457.252	1310	265.998		
Total	352188.559	1311			

  

Variables in Equation					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardised Coefficient	t	Sig	
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	44.621	1.399		31.892	.000
Sex	3.380	.902	.103	3.745	.000

$\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $R = 0.10$ ,  $R\text{-Square} = 0.01$

a. **Dependent Variable:** Academic Performance

b. **Predictors (Constant):** Sex

As shown in table 5, a linear regression statistics was used to determine the relationship between sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The result revealed a significant positive relationship between the two variables,  $F(1, 1326) = 14.028$   $p < 0.05$  level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, which means that there is a significant relationship between sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The beta value of 0.10 showed that sex contributed 1% to the variability in academic performance of secondary school students.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

**Table 6:** Regression analysis on school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	4772.159	1	4772.159	18.007	.000 <sup>p</sup>
Residual	329686.083	1244	265.021		
Total	334458.242	1245			

  

Variables in Equation					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardised Coefficient	t	Sig	
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	55.234	1.409		39.190	.000
School Location	-3.954	.932	-.119	-4.243	.000

$\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $R = 0.12$ ,  $R\text{-Square} = 0.01$

a. **Dependent Variable:** Academic Performance

b. **Predictors (Constant):** School Location

As shown in table 6, a linear regression statistics was used to determine the relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The result revealed a significant positive relationship between the two variables,  $F(1, 1326) = 18.007$   $p < 0.05$  level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, which means that there is a significant relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. The beta value of 0.12 showed that school location contributed 1% to the variability in academic performance of secondary school students.

## DISCUSSION

The first finding revealed that there is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. This finding implies that academic self-efficacy can influence academic performance among secondary school students. Students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals for themselves and persist in the face of difficulties. They believe they have the capability to master the material and overcome obstacles, leading to greater motivation and effort. Self-efficacious students are more likely to employ effective learning strategies such as time management, active learning, seeking help when needed, and monitoring their own progress. These strategies contribute to better comprehension, retention, and application of knowledge, ultimately enhancing academic performance. When faced with setbacks or failures, students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to bounce back and persevere. They view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable obstacles, leading to greater resilience and persistence in their academic pursuits. Academic self-efficacy is associated with positive emotional states such as confidence, enthusiasm, and reduced anxiety about academic tasks. These emotional states facilitate learning and cognitive functioning, leading to improved academic performance.

This study corroborates that of Elahi and Amra (2022) found a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement in high school students. The study also agrees with the work of Akomolafe et al. (2013), who reported that self-efficacy significantly predicts academic achievement among secondary school students. The study also agrees with the work of Basith et al. (2021), who found that academic self-efficacy is a predictor of academic achievement. The study also agrees with the work of Richardson et al. (2012), who concluded that psychological correlates like self-efficacy are consistently associated with university students' academic performance. The study also agrees with the study by Akomolafe et al. (2013), who specifically examined self-efficacy as a predictor of academic achievement among secondary school students in Nigeria. They found that self-efficacy significantly predicted the academic achievement of both male and female secondary school students (Akomolafe et al., 2013). The study also agrees with the study by Wang et al. (2017), who found a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance, finding that academic buoyancy (ability to deal with academic setbacks) partially mediated this relationship among high school students.

The second finding showed that there is a significant relationship between sex and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. This finding implies that sex can influence the academic performance of secondary school students. This relationship can

manifest in various ways, often influenced by cultural, social, and biological factors. Historically, male students have tended to outperform female students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects. However, recent trends show that this gap is narrowing, with girls performing equally well or even outperforming boys in some regions. Female students often outperform male students in language arts, reading, and writing. This trend is consistent across many countries and educational systems. Girls often achieve higher overall grades and have higher graduation rates from secondary school compared to boys. They tend to perform better in coursework and continuous assessments.

Societal expectations and stereotypes can influence academic performance. Girls may be encouraged to excel in language arts and humanities, while boys might be pushed towards STEM subjects. These expectations can shape interests, motivation, and confidence in different subjects. Parents and teachers may have different expectations for boys and girls, which can affect their academic performance. Girls often receive more encouragement to adhere to school rules and complete assignments, leading to better academic outcomes. On average, girls tend to develop language and reading skills earlier than boys, which can contribute to better performance in related subjects. Boys and girls may also have different learning styles and cognitive strengths, influencing their academic performance in various areas. Girls are generally observed to have better study habits, such as more organized note-taking, consistent homework completion, and higher levels of attentiveness in class. Boys, on the other hand, may exhibit more disruptive behaviors, which can negatively impact their academic performance. Girls often demonstrate higher levels of self-regulation and intrinsic motivation towards their studies, which can lead to better academic outcomes.

This study corroborates that of Yusuf and Adigun (2015) examined the influence of school sex, location and type on students' academic performance in Ekiti state secondary schools. The findings revealed that school sex had a significant influence on students' academic performance. The study also agrees with the work of Olanrewaju and Anofjie (2021), who investigated the relationship between male and female student problems and academic performance. The study also examined the influence of sex on this relationship. However, most of the studies found no significant relationship between sex and academic performance. The study also agrees with the work of Yusuf and Adigun (2015), who found that while school type and location had an influence on academic performance, sex did not have a significant influence on students' academic performance in Ekiti state secondary schools. The study also agrees with the study of Olanrewaju and Anofjie (2021) on sexual abuse and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools did not find a significant relationship between sex and academic performance.

The third finding revealed that there is a significant relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District. This finding highlights the impact of geographical and socio-economic factors on education. Schools in different locations often have varying access to resources, quality of infrastructure, and socio-economic contexts, all of which can influence student outcomes. Schools in urban areas typically have better access to educational resources, such as libraries, laboratories, and technology. They often attract more qualified teachers and have greater opportunities for extracurricular activities, all of which can enhance academic performance. Schools in rural areas often face challenges such as limited access to quality

educational materials, fewer qualified teachers, and inadequate infrastructure. These limitations can hinder students' learning experiences and academic achievements.

Urban areas generally have higher average incomes and more diverse employment opportunities, leading to better funding for schools. In contrast, rural and some suburban areas may struggle with economic challenges that impact school funding and resources. Parents in urban areas may have higher educational levels and more time to engage with their children's schooling, positively affecting academic performance. In rural areas, parents might have lower educational levels and more demanding work schedules, limiting their involvement. Urban schools are more likely to attract experienced and highly qualified teachers due to better living conditions and professional opportunities. Rural schools often face difficulties in recruiting and retaining quality teachers, impacting the quality of instruction. Teachers in urban schools have more opportunities for professional development and collaboration with peers, which can enhance their teaching practices and student outcomes. Urban schools often have better infrastructure, including well-maintained buildings, modern classrooms, and adequate sanitation facilities. Rural schools may lack these basic amenities, creating an uncondusive learning environment. Urban schools might offer a safer and more secure environment compared to some rural or peri-urban areas where schools may face issues such as vandalism or inadequate safety measures.

The above finding agrees with the view of Ella and Ita (2017) whose study to determine the correlational relationship between school location and students' academic performances in English language in secondary schools in Ogoja Local Government Area revealed that there is a significant difference in students' academic performances in English language on the basis of school location. The finding of this study also agrees with that of Eraikhuemen and Ogumogu (2014) whose study on the influence of sex and school location on Mathematics achievement of Senior Secondary School II students in Edo State, indicated that, there is a significant difference in the academic achievement of urban and rural students. And who hinted the difference in performances may be because urban environment is more conducive than the rural area. This finding however, disagrees with the finding of Ekpenyong (2017), whose finding suggests that school location has no significant influence on students' academic achievement.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the findings obtained, it is concluded that students' belief in their own abilities to succeed academically plays a crucial role in their actual academic performance. That gender-related factors influence academic performance, with potential differences in performance across various subjects and activities. That students in different geographical areas may face varying challenges and opportunities that affect their academic performance.

Based on the findings from this study the following recommendations were made that:

1. Schools should implement programmes that enhance students' academic self-efficacy through mentorship, goal-setting workshops, and positive reinforcement strategies.
2. Schools should adopt gender-inclusive teaching practices that encourage equal participation and performance across all subjects

3. Policymakers should ensure that schools in rural areas receive adequate funding and resources to match those in urban areas.

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