STUDENTS’ ATTITUDE, MOTIVATION AND PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT AS CORRELATES OF ARABIC LANGUAGE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

BY
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Abstract
This study assessed the relationship among students’ attitude, motivation and Parental encouragement academic performance in Arabic Language. The study surveys a sample of 300 senior secondary school students randomly selected from 15 public and private schools in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun state, Nigeria. Using the PPMC and ANOVA statistical tools for analysis, results showed that: there was a significant relationship between students’ attitude to Arabic Language and academic performance; there was no significant relationship between students’ motivation for the language and academic performance; there was no significant relationship between students’ parental level of education and academic encouragement received at home for the study of the language. Results also shows that; there was a significant difference in the mean of the groups ($F_{2,299} = p<0.005$), it was then concluded that there was a significant difference in students’ attitude to Arabic language based on gender and their age groups. On the basis of these findings, the study concludes on some recommendations which include among others, that parents get actively involved in the Arabic learning of their children by providing basic necessary materials needed to facilitates learning and get community assistance where available.

Keywords: Attitude, Motivation, Parental encouragement, Academic performance

Introduction
Arabic Language Education was essentially studied for religious purposes from its introduction into Nigeria and prior to the coming of the Missionaries. The emergence of the language in the history of Nigeria which dates back to the 11th century C.E shows that the early Nigerian Muslims gave much recognition to the language in order to understand their religion. As a result, Arabic and Islamic studies became a twin subject in citadels of learning. Thus established a close relationship between Arabic and Islamic studies in schools and it made easy for students to access it from time to time. It is also this relationship that made learning of Arabic language in schools only popular and peculiar to Muslims students in mostly Islamic school or environment (Fafunwa, 1974; Olaniyan-Shobowale, 2016). This status and perhaps relationship with Islamic studies constitute major factor in the overall attitude of students towards the language in the very few schools where Arabic language is studied alongside other secular subjects.

Attitude plays a crucial role in any learning process especially in a subject that requires full concentration. Jung (2018) defines attitude as a "readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way. Online Business Dictionary (2019) also defines attitude as a predisposition or a
tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude influences an individual’s choice, action, and responses to challenges, incentives, and rewards. Positive attitude towards learning involves full students’ concentration towards learning. Observation shows that students with poor academic performance in a subject are more negligent towards its learning and believe that it will not help them being successful in future (Oliveira, 2010). Positive attitude of student brings a stimulating environment, where students feel comfortable and safe, satisfied with their teachers and derive joy and pleasure from learning Arabic language.

As attitude plays its role in learning, motivation also plays a fundamental recipe for academic success. Motivation which involves internal and external factor that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to job, role, or subject or to make an effort attain a desire goal. Dornyei (2012) argued that motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it, and how long they are willing to sustain the activity. In order words, “motivation is what gets you going, keeps you going, and determines where you’re trying to go”. Alderman (2016) indicates that those students who have optimum motivation have an edge because they have adaptive attitudes and strategies, such as maintaining intrinsic interest, goal setting, and self-monitoring. Besides, motivational variables interact with cognitive, behavioural, and contextual factors to upset self-regulation.

Motivation can come in term of parental encouragement which can be regarded as external motivating factor. Parental encouragement has a correlation with students’ performance in learning; it is all the activities that parents do to help their children succeed in school and life. It includes everything from making sure they are prepared to go to school every day to attending parent’s meetings and conferences, to volunteering their time and talents to the school and their child’s classroom and to the importance and value they placed on education. Parent encouragement is therefore, very vital to students’ success (Dornyei, 2002). Parents are a child’s first teacher and parents are partners with teachers in the education of their children. When parents are engaged in learning, students receive higher grades and test scores and therefore have a better chance of successes and graduating, students have better attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, and fewer behavioural issues so they are actually present in school to learn when parent are engaged. Parental encouragement also leads students so they have more confidence in the school and hold higher expectations and opinions of the teachers, they feel more confident in their abilities and are more likely to continue their own education (Kazmi, 2011).

Parents can play a major role in encouraging students in Arabic learning both in the classroom and outside. When many students are not motivated to learn Arabic language by parent, they perceive the learning in tertiary institution as a waste of time and they sees it as a course that is not lucrative enough to cater for their future needs (Raji, 2002; Olaniyan-Shobowale, 2015). While those that may study it in their first degree do not want to pursue it for their future academic endeavour’s. Thus, constructive, yet logical analyses of students’ attitude, parental encouragement and motivation towards the Arabic language in Nigeria become necessary in order to determine their relevance in improving the status of the subject in Nigerian system of education.
Statement of the Problem
Negative attitude, lack of motivation and parental encouragement are some of the factors that could hinder students’ performance in language learning and Arabic is not an exception to this. Gardner & Lambert (2009); Dornyei (2001); Dornyei & Csizér (2002) and Gardner (2010) posit that these conditions are needed to successfully learn a language either as a Second or Foreign Language (SL/FL), but most researchers and educators agree that attitude and motivation to learn a second language are specific factors that determine the success in the language learning process. Negative attitude towards the learning of Arabic language in school has contributed to great under performance of students which created lot of fear and anxiety for teachers, parents and other educational stakeholders as a result of students’ performance as they lack interest, curiosity and patience needed for learning and performing related tasks pertaining to the subject. Studies on students’ achievements in Arabic Language have mostly pointed to the fact that student’s attitude is a major contributor yet it has received very little attention if any. There is therefore a need to study the effect of students’ attitudes as is the integral part of successful language learning.

Lack of motivation of students in learning Arabic language constitute a major setback in and outside the classroom, students are not motivated due to some certain factors like lack of recognition, less importance of the subject, teacher attitude among others. Series of reported cases have shown that students are not motivated well enough to learn the subject because the subject is easily categorized as a religious language and therefore, it is not useful in the Nigeria labour market. Teachers teaching the subject tend to be strict on the students, making the learning of the subject more technical for the students.

Research Hypotheses
All these constitute the problem this study aimed to solve. The study hence, tested the following null hypotheses:

H₀₁: There will be no significant relationship between students’ attitude and academic performance of students in Arabic language
H₀₂: There will be no significant relationship between motivation and academic performance of students in Arabic language
H₀₃: There will be no significant relationship between parental encouragement and academic performance of students in Arabic language.
H₀₄: there is no significant difference in attitude of students to Arabic language based on gender, school type and age group.

Methodology
For the purpose of this study, a descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of this study was the fifteen (15) Senior Secondary School (private and public) in Ijebu-Ode local government Area of Ogun State. The samples were 106 students randomly selected from the private schools and 194 students from public secondary schools. Out of these, 61% were male while only 39% were females. Their ages groups ranged from 10 -13; 14 -17 and 18 -20 years of age. In terms of parental level of education, 52.3% of them possessed the O’level certificate; 29.7% National Certificate in Education; 12% possessed B.SC; 2.3% had Postgraduates certificate while the remaining 3.7% were others. The research instrument used was a structured – open, close ended questionnaire for quantitative data and student’s academic achievement test in Arabic language. The questionnaire tagged Students Attitude, Motivation and Parental Encouragement Questionnaire (SAMPEQ) was divided into two sections: section A and section
B. Section A contained the demographic information of the respondent, namely: name, school, age, sex e.t.c. While, section B was made up of a structured twenty (20) questionnaire using Likert-type four point scale to gather information from the respondents. The students’ academic assessment test was used to calculate the academic performance of the students using a set of Arabic language questions to test the students on Arabic language proficiency. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze collected data. PPMC calculation was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Results

Table 1: H₀₁ relationship between students’ attitude and academic performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Attitude</th>
<th>Students’ Academic Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Pearson correlation co-efficient of .806 in the above table shows that there is a significant relationship between students’ attitude and their academic performance in Arabic language (P<0.05). In this wise, there is a significant relationship between students’ attitude and their academic performance in Arabic language implying that the students’ attitude, where positive is expected to translate to better students’ academic performance in Arabic language.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between students’ motivation and their academic performance in Arabic language.

Table 2: Correlation between students’ motivation and academic performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Motivation</th>
<th>Students’ Academic Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Pearson correlation co-efficient of 0.024 in the above table shows that there was no significant relationship between students’ motivation and their academic performance in Arabic language (P>0.05). Therefore, there is no significant relationship between students’ motivation and their academic performance in Arabic language. This implies that students’ motivation does not affect the students’ academic performance in Arabic language.
**H03**: There is no significant relationship between parental level of education and parental encouragement to study Arabic language.

**Table 3: Correlation between parental encouragement and academic performance of students in Arabic language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parental Level of Education</th>
<th>Parental Encouragement</th>
<th>Parental Encouragement</th>
<th>Parental Encouragement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Encouragement</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Pearson correlation co-efficient of .104 in the above table shows that there is no significant relationship between parental level of education and parental encouragement to study Arabic language (P>0.05). Therefore, there is a significant relationship between parental level of education and parental encouragement to study Arabic language. This implies that parental level of education does not affects the parental encouragement to study Arabic language.

**H03**: There is no significant difference in attitude of students’ to Arabic language based on gender, school type and age group.

**Table 4: Difference between students’ attitude to Arabic language based on Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE TO ARABIC LANGUAGE</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>1.01635</td>
<td>.07513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE TO ARABIC LANGUAGE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>3.4957</td>
<td>1.09563</td>
<td>.10129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances in table 4 gives the P value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 therefore, that there is a significant difference in the attitude of students’ to Arabic language based on gender.

**Table 5: Difference between students’ attitude to Arabic language based on School type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL TYPE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE TO ARABIC LANGUAGE</td>
<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.1038</td>
<td>1.03214</td>
<td>.10025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE TO ARABIC LANGUAGE</td>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>3.2423</td>
<td>1.09548</td>
<td>.07865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances in table 5 gives a P value of 0.286 which is greater than 0.05, so we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the attitude of students’ to Arabic language based on school type.

**Table 6: Students’ Attitude to Arabic Language Based on Age Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The tables above show the analysis of the difference between students’ attitude to Arabic language based on Age group. Table 6 shows the mean scores of students based on their age groups. It shows that the students within the age group of 14 – 17 years have the highest mean score compared to other students’ age group. Table 6 shows the one way ANOVA test. The results shows that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the groups (F_{2,299} = p<0.005), it was then concluded that there was a significant difference between students’ attitude to Arabic language based on Age group.

**Discussion**

Findings of this study showed that there was significant relationship between students’ attitude and academic performance of students in learning Arabic language. This conform with the view of Zan and Martino (2007) who sees that attitudes have a strong effect on behaviour which helps in understanding and predicting peoples’ behaviour in a wide range of contexts. Attitudes though not directly observable are inferred from observable responses and behaviours. Also Nicolaidou and Philippou (2003), asserts that when students have positive attitudes towards mathematics they would achieve better which reflect a significant relationship between attitudes and performance. A study with secondary school students also showed that those with better academic performance exhibited more positive attitudes towards math than those with low performance (Mato and De La Torre, 2010). Most researches on attitudes points to the fact that attitude plays a crucial role in learning and achievement (Zan and Martino, 2007) hence determines the student’s success in any subject. It determines their ability and willingness to learn the subject, work on a variety of assigned tasks and their persistence in the tasks available. In general, the conceptions students hold about Arabic language will determine to a large extent, how they approach tasks leading them into either productive or non productive orientations. In many cases, students have been found to regard Arabic as not relevant to their life aspirations and future ambitions (Olaniyan-Shobowale, 2016).

The findings of the second hypothesis shows that there was no relationship between motivation and academic performance of students in learning Arabic language. This finding, surprisingly negates findings of studies of Olaniyan-Shobowale (2016); Ghaith (2000); Gardner and Lambert (1972) that affirm that Success in mastering a foreign language would depend not only on intellectual capacity and language aptitude but also on the learner’s motivation for the language, learners’ expectancy and total motivation, and also between expectancy and estimation of ability. They also claimed that the results revealed that valence has significant correlations with integrative motivation, with instrumental motivation, with effort, with expectancy, with estimation of ability, and with total motivation.
Findings of hypothesis three affirms that there was no significant relationship between parents’ level of educational qualification and the level of encouragement given to students. This result does not conform to Muola (2010) study that observed that the motivation and encouragement received by children whose fathers have attained high educational level and are in high income occupations tend to be high. Harb and El-shaaraawai (2006) also reported that the relation of parent’s education to their children’s academic performances rests upon quite specific beliefs and behaviours. Parent’s educational qualification is linked with their language competence, which causes a significant influence in the manner in which parent’s communicated with their kids. Consequently parental education does have a major influence on children’s academic achievements. Hughes & Fusstenbarg (2005) posit that a parent’s interest in their child’s education increases the rate of the educational success of their kids.

Findings of hypothesis four, revealed a significant differences in the attitude of students towards Arabic learning based on gender. This result confirms previous findings of studies in Oderinde (2007); Olaniyan-Shobowale (2015) that the male students tend to do better in Arabic than female students. Although, traditionally, studies of Chavez (2001); Carr & Pauwels (2006); Murphy (2010); Glowka (2014) showed that girls tend to outperformed boys and had a better attitude towards language learning. The reason for the variation in the case of Arabic is not far-fetched as Arabic language is erroneously termed a ‘twin of Islamic studies or religious language’, thus it is a male- dominated field. As regards students’ attitude to Arabic language based on school type, results showed there was no significant differences in the attitude based on the type of school; private or public.

**Conclusion**

This study was an overall test carried out to observe the significant relationship and differences of all independent variable (Students attitude, motivation and parental encouragement) on the dependent variable (academic performance). Results concluded that students generally have a favourable attitude towards Arabic language. The current students like, enjoy and look forward to the Arabic language lessons. Thus, there is a positive and good attitude towards Arabic language as a learning subject by the secondary school students in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. The students do not hate the subject as is widely thought but exhibit favourable attitudes towards it. Though positive attitudes alone may not significantly predict good performance as shown by the students’ grades, there are other mediating factors which are motivation and parental encouragement. From these findings, this paper argues that Nigeria as a nation in the past had benefited significantly from the flourish of the Arabic language and that its present neglect by government would not augur well for Nigerian development. The paper further, argues that Arabic has a lot to offer in the upliftment of the country, especially in the areas of religion, education, economy, foreign diplomacy, and security. Finally, the paper affirms that the significance of Arabic as a language transcends the religious sphere and concludes on the note that Arabic should be given its prime place and be allowed to contribute its own quota to the development of Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

The paper therefore offers the following recommendations:

1. On the issue of motivation, teachers and parents are encouraged to subtly explain the benefits inherent in learning a foreign language like Arabic beyond it attachment with the Islamic religion. This will go along way in motivating even students who are not Muslims;
2. The role of Arabic teachers is equally paramount; they are advised to teach Arabic using Arts like; Arabic music; movies; cartoons, and to incorporate technology in the classroom. This is here, suggested as an area for further researches;
3. Although, Arabic is learned as an elective in schools hence, very little time is allotted to it on the time table, teachers should endeavour to make the students speak it as often as possible;
4. Parents are equally encouraged to study the language with their wards at home or to look within their community for members who speak the language for further simulation. This is also another area for further researches. Parents are equally enjoined to provide basic Arabic learning materials that would simplify the language to their children
5. All stakeholders should put all hands on desk on the issue of motivation of students; there should be a well-designed strategy for the motivation of students especially on foreign languages like Arabic language

References


