

Students' Motivation, Aspirations, Engagement and Educational Success in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined students' motivation, aspirations, engagement and educational success in contemporary society in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, within the broader conference theme, Restoring Trust in Education: Preparing Future-Ready Citizens for the Knowledge Economy. The study was guided by three objectives: to examine the influence of students' motivation on educational success; determine the relationship between students' educational aspirations and educational success; and assess the influence of students' engagement on educational success. A correlational survey design was adopted. Data were collected from students using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyse the data at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that students' motivation had a significant positive relationship with educational success, indicating that motivated students demonstrated stronger commitment to learning and achieved better academic outcomes. Educational aspirations also showed a significant positive relationship with educational success, suggesting that students with clear and realistic educational goals were more likely to demonstrate persistence and academic achievement. Furthermore, students' engagement significantly predicted educational success, with active participation in classroom activities, learning tasks and school programmes contributing substantially to positive educational outcomes. The study concludes that restoring trust in education requires deliberate efforts to strengthen students' motivation, aspirations and meaningful engagement as foundations for developing future-ready citizens. It recommends strengthened career guidance and mentorship programmes; provision of supportive learning environments and recognition systems that enhance students' motivation; and increased parental, teacher and community support for students' educational aspirations and active engagement in learning.

Keywords: students' motivation; educational aspirations; student engagement; educational success; knowledge economy

1 Introduction

The contemporary global economy is increasingly characterized as a knowledge economy, in which information, technological competence, innovation and cognitive skills constitute major sources of productivity and competitiveness, rather than reliance predominantly on manual labour (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019; World Bank, 2018). However, declining confidence in traditional education systems has emerged in many societies because curricula, teaching methods and assessment practices are often perceived as insufficiently responsive to rapid technological, economic and social changes. Contemporary learners therefore require future-ready competencies, including critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, creativity, communication, collaboration, adaptability and emotional intelligence (OECD, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2023).

In Nigeria, these global demands intersect with persistent systemic challenges, including inadequate educational financing, insufficient infrastructure, shortages of learning resources and recurrent disruptions associated with teacher industrial actions. Although national education reforms increasingly emphasize digital skills, entrepreneurship, employability and competency-based learning, implementation remains constrained by resource limitations and uneven institutional capacity (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; World Bank, 2018). This contributes to a continuing mismatch between the competencies acquired by many graduates and the practical, technological and problem-solving skills demanded by employers. Consequently, restoring public and student trust in education requires more than increasing enrolment; it requires making schooling demonstrably relevant to contemporary economic and social realities.

These challenges are particularly significant in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, a predominantly rural and agrarian community where farming and related livelihoods constitute important aspects of social and economic life. Geographical isolation, inadequate electricity supply, limited internet connectivity and sub-standard school facilities can restrict students' exposure to digital learning and knowledge-economy opportunities. At the same time, community values, family expectations and farming-oriented lifestyles may shape young people's perceptions of schooling, occupational aspirations and educational success. Within this context, student motivation concerns the factors that stimulate learners to participate in education and persist despite economic and environmental difficulties; student aspirations refer to their educational, occupational and life goals; while student engagement encompasses their active participation in classroom learning, school activities and extracurricular experiences. Educational success should consequently be understood not only through examination grades but also through practical competencies, employability, problem-solving capacity, responsible citizenship and the ability to apply knowledge to everyday life. The central problem is that restoring trust in education in Boki requires stronger alignment between what motivates students, what they aspire to become, how actively they engage in learning and the competencies required by the knowledge economy. Yet, limited empirical research has simultaneously examined these student psychological factors alongside broader economic and future-readiness demands in rural Cross River State. This study therefore addresses this gap by examining students' motivation, aspirations, engagement and educational success as interconnected dimensions of building future-ready citizens in Boki.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine students' motivation, aspirations, engagement and educational success in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the influence of students' motivation on educational success;
2. determine the relationship between students' educational aspirations and educational success; and
3. assess the influence of students' engagement on educational success.

2 Literature review and theoretical framework

Restoring trust in education requires rebuilding public confidence in the ability of educational institutions to provide meaningful knowledge, relevant skills and equitable opportunities for social and economic advancement. It encompasses public perception, institutional credibility, accountabil-

ity and the value society places on schooling. In the contemporary knowledge economy, the credibility of education increasingly depends on whether schools equip learners with competencies required for participation in rapidly changing economic and technological environments. Future-ready citizens require 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, problem-solving, adaptability, digital literacy and socio-emotional competence (OECD, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2023). Within this framework, students' motivation and aspirations constitute important foundations of educational success. Motivation may arise intrinsically from curiosity, personal interest and the desire for mastery, or extrinsically from parental expectations, rewards, employment prospects and social recognition. Aspirations represent learners' desired educational, occupational and life outcomes and can influence persistence and commitment to schooling. Student engagement, expressed through classroom participation, attention to learning tasks, attendance, interaction with teachers and involvement in extracurricular activities, provides the behavioural pathway through which motivation and aspirations can translate into educational success. Educational success, therefore, extends beyond examination performance to include retention, acquisition of relevant competencies, problem-solving capacity, responsible citizenship and preparedness for further education and employment (Fredricks et al., 2004; Ryan and Deci, 2020). The framework assumes that when learners perceive education as credible, relevant and capable of improving their future prospects, they are more likely to develop stronger motivation, aspirations and engagement, thereby improving educational outcomes.

The educational landscape of Cross River State reflects both national educational priorities and state-level efforts to improve access, quality, infrastructure, teacher effectiveness and learning outcomes. Nevertheless, educational development remains influenced by disparities in resources and the socioeconomic circumstances of different communities. These issues become particularly important in Boki Local Government Area, a predominantly rural and agrarian environment where geographical conditions, household economic circumstances and community structures can shape educational participation. Parental educational background may influence children's attitudes toward schooling, academic expectations, learning support and career aspirations, while community attitudes can either strengthen or weaken the perceived value of formal education. Rural infrastructural constraints, including inadequate school facilities, limited access to electricity and digital technologies, poor internet connectivity and insufficient learning resources, may further restrict students' exposure to the competencies required in the knowledge economy. Consequently, the restoration of trust in education in Nigeria cannot be separated from the local realities within which students learn. A credible educational system must connect classroom learning with students' aspirations, community needs and emerging employment opportunities while ensuring equitable access to quality resources. This contextual perspective supports the argument that strengthening students' motivation, aspirations and engagement requires not only individual-level interventions but also improvements in school leadership, teaching quality, infrastructure, parental involvement and community participation. Such an integrated approach can enhance educational success and help prepare young people for productive participation in Nigeria's increasingly knowledge-driven economy (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; World Bank, 2018).

2.1 Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), propounded by Albert Bandura in 1986. The theory explains human behaviour as the product of reciprocal interaction among personal factors, behaviour and the environment (Bandura, 1986). SCT assumes that individuals are active agents in

their own development and that learning occurs not only through direct experience but also through observation, imitation and interaction with significant others and the social environment. The theory is relevant to this study because students' motivation, aspirations, engagement and educational success in Boki Local Government Area are shaped by the interaction between their personal beliefs, school experiences, family circumstances, teachers, peers and wider community. Students who observe successful teachers, professionals, parents or community role models may develop positive academic attitudes and stronger aspirations, while supportive school and community environments can encourage persistence and active engagement. The theory therefore provides a useful explanation of how students develop confidence, educational aspirations and learning behaviours within their socioeconomic and cultural environment. Its assumptions further suggest that students can regulate their behaviour, develop self-efficacy and pursue goals when they perceive themselves as capable of achieving desired outcomes (Bandura, 1986, 1997).

SCT also complements the broader knowledge-economy perspective by recognizing that education develops human capabilities that can increase individual productivity and contribute to economic growth. Investment in quality education equips individuals with knowledge, skills, creativity and problem-solving abilities that enhance employability, productivity and participation in economic development (Becker, 1993; World Bank, 2018). In explaining student motivation, the theory is further complemented by Self-Determination Theory, particularly its emphasis on autonomy, competence and relatedness as fundamental psychological needs that support intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Within Boki, students are more likely to develop positive educational attitudes when they experience competence in learning, some autonomy in pursuing educational goals and meaningful relationships with teachers, parents and peers. At the same time, the social-learning dimension of SCT explains how environmental conditions and community role models can influence students' character, aspirations and academic attitudes. Thus, the theory provides a framework for understanding how individual motivation and aspirations interact with family, school and community environments to influence engagement and educational success, while highlighting the importance of restoring trust in education by making schooling relevant to students' future opportunities in the knowledge economy.

2.2 Empirical review

In a previous study, Kriegbaum et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of 74 studies involving 80,145 students across different countries and educational contexts to examine the relative contribution of intelligence and motivation to school achievement. The study used correlation and path-model/meta-analytic techniques. Findings showed that motivation was positively related to academic achievement ($r = .27$), while intelligence and motivation jointly explained substantial variation in achievement. The authors concluded that motivation makes a unique contribution to students' academic success and recommended greater attention to students' motivational beliefs and expectations in educational practice. The study provides strong global evidence for the present study's motivation–success linkage, but its broad international scope does not sufficiently explain how rural socioeconomic conditions, educational aspirations and community realities affect motivation in Boki LGA.

However, Okotie and Adeyemi (2019) investigated achievement motivation as a predictor of academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Edo State, Nigeria. Using a multistage sampling procedure, the researchers selected respondents from the three senatorial districts of the state. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and stepwise multiple regression. The findings indicated that achievement motivation significantly predicted students' academic

achievement in Mathematics. The researchers therefore recommended that schools should deliberately strengthen students' achievement motivation through appropriate psychological and educational strategies. This finding establishes a national empirical link between motivation and educational success, but the study focused mainly on achievement motivation and Mathematics performance; it did not simultaneously examine students' aspirations, engagement and future-readiness, thereby leaving an important gap for the present study.

Meanwhile, Onete et al. (2012) examined the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among first-year education students of the Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey/ex-post facto design and randomly selected 750 respondents from a population of 1,352 students. Data collected with the Education Students' Achievement Motivation Scale were analysed using ANOVA. Contrary to some international and national findings, the study reported that neither academic achievement motivation nor social achievement motivation had a statistically significant influence on students' academic performance. The authors recommended appropriate measures to improve students' motivation and academic performance. Empirically, this contrasting finding demonstrates that the motivation-achievement relationship may vary according to educational and social context. However, the study was conducted among university students in an urban setting and did not examine rural secondary-school students in Boki LGA, educational aspirations, student engagement, or preparation for the knowledge economy. This constitutes a significant contextual and conceptual gap that the present study seeks to address.

2.3 Summary of literature and gap

Despite the growing body of literature on motivation, aspirations, engagement and academic achievement, important gaps remain. First, much of the available evidence examines these variables separately, limiting understanding of how they jointly contribute to educational success. Second, findings from international and broader Nigerian studies cannot automatically explain the educational realities of Boki Local Government Area in Cross River State, where local socioeconomic conditions, school resources, family circumstances and community expectations may shape students' educational experiences differently. Third, the relationship between these student-related factors and the broader goal of preparing future-ready citizens for the knowledge economy remains insufficiently established within this specific local context. Consequently, the present study seeks to address the contextual, empirical and integrative gaps by examining students' motivation, educational aspirations and engagement in relation to educational success in Boki Local Government Area. It also connects these factors to the broader objective of restoring trust in education and preparing young people with the knowledge, competencies and aspirations required for meaningful participation in contemporary society. The study is therefore positioned to generate locally relevant evidence that may inform educational policy, school improvement strategies and interventions aimed at strengthening students' commitment to learning and future opportunities.

3 Methodology

The quantitative methodology was considered appropriate because the study sought to measure students' motivation, aspirations, engagement and educational success using numerical data and statistical techniques. It enabled the researcher to identify patterns, compare responses and establish empirical relationships among the variables. The correlational survey design was adopted because it allows the investigation of relationships among variables as they naturally occur, without manipulat-

ing respondents' educational experiences or intervening in the school environment. It was particularly suitable for collecting information from different educational stakeholders across Boki Local Government Area within a defined period. Furthermore, PPMC provided a means of examining the relationships between pairs of variables, while multiple regression enabled the assessment of the combined and predictive contributions of motivation, aspirations and engagement to educational success. The design therefore aligned with the study's objectives of generating evidence that could inform educational policy, improve student engagement and support efforts to restore trust in education and prepare future-ready citizens for the knowledge economy.

3.1 Sample size

Using Taro Yamane's formula at a 5% level of precision:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad (1)$$

where n is the sample size, N is the population and $e = 0.05$ is the level of precision. The total population is $N = 107 + 52 + 38 + 25 = 222$.

Table 1. Taro Yamane sample size.

Respondent	Population (N)	Calculation	Sample size (n)
Students	107	$107 \div [1 + 107(0.05)^2]$	84
Teachers	52	$52 \div [1 + 52(0.05)^2]$	46
Parents	38	$38 \div [1 + 38(0.05)^2]$	35
School administrators	25	$25 \div [1 + 25(0.05)^2]$	24
Total	222	—	189

Source: Researcher's pilot study, 2026.

Thus, using Taro Yamane's formula separately for each respondent category, the required sample is 189 respondents.

4 Results

The data collected for the study are presented in tables according to the characteristics of the respondents and the variables investigated. The respondents comprised 84 students, 46 teachers, 35 parents and 24 school administrators, giving a total sample of 189 respondents. Respondents were assigned numerical codes for statistical analysis, while demographic characteristics such as age were presented using frequencies and percentages. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the major study variables, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the relationships between students' motivation, educational aspirations, student engagement and educational success. Multiple regression analysis was further employed to determine the combined predictive influence of motivation, aspirations and engagement on educational success. All inferential analyses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Table 2. Respondents by category and coding.

Respondent	Respondent code	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students	1	84	44.4
Teachers	2	46	24.3
Parents	3	35	18.5
School administrators	4	24	12.7
Total	—	189	100.0

Source: Field survey data, 2026.

Table 2 shows that students constituted the largest group of respondents, with 84 (44.4%), followed by teachers with 46 (24.3%), parents with 35 (18.5%), and school administrators with 24 (12.7%). The distribution indicates that all four categories of stakeholders were represented in the study.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by age.

Respondent	Age range	Mean	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Students	12–18	15.15	84	44.4
Teachers	25–55	42.26	46	24.3
Parents	25–59	42.26	35	18.5
School administrators	33–60	45.96	24	12.7
Total	—	—	189	100.0

Source: Researcher's pilot study, 2026.

Table 3 indicates that the students had the lowest average age ($M = 15.15$ years), while school administrators had the highest average age ($M = 45.96$ years). The age distribution reflects the different roles of the respondents in the educational system.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the major study variables.

Variable	N	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
Students' motivation	189	2.97	0.55
Educational aspirations	189	2.92	0.57
Student engagement	189	2.93	0.57
Educational success	189	2.89	0.63

Source: Researcher's paper, 2026.

The results in Table 4 indicate that students' motivation recorded the highest mean score ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.55$), followed by student engagement ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.57$) and educational aspirations ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.57$). Educational success recorded a mean of 2.89 ($SD = 0.63$). The findings suggest generally moderate levels of motivation, aspirations, engagement and educational success among the respondents.

4.2 Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC)

Table 5. Correlation matrix of motivation, aspirations, engagement and educational success.

Variable	Motivation	Aspirations	Engagement	Educational success
Motivation	1.000	.457	.567	.627
Aspirations	.457	1.000	.556	.571
Engagement	.567	.556	1.000	.624
Educational success	.627	.571	.624	1.000

Note: $p < .01$; $N = 189$. Source: Researcher's pilot study, 2026.

The correlation results show a positive relationship between students' motivation and educational success ($r = .627$). Educational aspirations also had a positive relationship with educational success ($r = .571$), while student engagement was positively related to educational success ($r = .624$). Since the observed relationships are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, the results indicate that higher motivation, stronger educational aspirations and greater engagement are associated with higher educational success.

4.3 Multiple regression analysis

Table 6. Multiple regression model summary.

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. error of the estimate
.736	.541	.534	0.427

Source: Researcher's pilot study, 2026.

The regression results indicate a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = .736$ and an R^2 of .541. This means that students' motivation, educational aspirations and student engagement jointly explained approximately 54.1% of the variance in educational success, while the remaining 45.9% may be attributed to other factors not included in the model.

Table 7. ANOVA for the multiple regression.

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	39.80	3	13.27	72.73	.000
Residual	33.76	185	0.18	—	—
Total	73.56	188	—	—	—

Source: Researcher's pilot study, 2026.

The ANOVA result shows that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(3,185) = 72.73$, $p < .001$. Since the probability value is less than 0.05, the combined contribution of motivation, aspirations and engagement to educational success is statistically significant.

Table 8. Regression coefficients.

Predictor	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	−0.010	0.200	—	−0.052	.959
Students' motivation	0.398	0.070	.349	5.652	.000
Educational aspirations	0.277	0.067	.252	4.105	.000
Student engagement	0.312	0.072	.286	4.325	.000

Note: Dependent variable: educational success. Source: Researcher's pilot study, 2026.

The regression coefficients indicate that students' motivation was the strongest predictor of educational success ($\beta = .349$, $p < .001$), followed by student engagement ($\beta = .286$, $p < .001$) and educational aspirations ($\beta = .252$, $p < .001$). All three predictors made statistically significant positive contributions to educational success.

The estimated regression equation is:

$$ES = -0.010 + 0.398M + 0.277A + 0.312E \quad (2)$$

where ES is educational success, M is students' motivation, A is educational aspirations and E is student engagement.

Therefore, the analysis suggests that students' motivation, educational aspirations and student engagement are significantly and positively associated with educational success. Their combined effect explains approximately 54.1% of the variation in educational success. Therefore, strengthening students' motivation, nurturing realistic educational and career aspirations, and promoting active participation in classroom and extracurricular activities may contribute substantially to educational success and the preparation of future-ready citizens in Boki Local Government Area.

5 Discussion of findings

The first objective of the study was to examine the influence of students' motivation on educational success in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The finding revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between students' motivation and educational success ($r = .627$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, the regression analysis showed that students' motivation made the strongest independent contribution to educational success ($\beta = .349$, $p < .001$). This implies that students who demonstrate greater interest in learning, persistence in academic tasks, willingness to overcome learning difficulties and positive attitudes towards schooling are more likely to achieve better educational outcomes. The finding suggests that motivation provides the psychological energy that encourages students to attend school regularly, participate actively in learning activities, complete academic tasks and persist when confronted with academic challenges. In the context of Boki Local Government Area, strengthening students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is therefore important for improving educational success. The result is consistent with the view that motivated learners are more likely to regulate their learning behaviour, invest effort in academic activities and develop persistence towards achieving educational goals. From the perspective of the conference theme, Restoring Trust in Education and Preparing Future-Ready Citizens for the Knowledge Economy, motivating students is not merely a strategy for improving examination performance; it is a means of rebuilding students' confidence in the value of education and developing learners who are resilient, self-directed and prepared to acquire the competencies required in a

knowledge-driven society. Where students perceive schooling as relevant to their future aspirations and socioeconomic development, their commitment to learning is likely to increase.

The second objective was to determine the relationship between students' educational aspirations and educational success. The result indicated a positive and statistically significant relationship between educational aspirations and educational success ($r = .571$, $p < .01$), while the regression analysis further demonstrated that educational aspirations significantly predicted educational success ($\beta = .252$, $p < .001$). This finding means that students who possess clear, realistic and positive expectations about their educational and future career achievements tend to demonstrate better educational outcomes. Educational aspirations can provide students with a sense of direction, purpose and future orientation, thereby encouraging them to establish academic goals and sustain the effort required to attain them. The finding is particularly relevant to contemporary society, where education is increasingly expected to provide learners with knowledge, skills, adaptability and competencies for participation in the knowledge economy. Students without meaningful educational and career aspirations may be less likely to perceive the relevance of classroom learning to their future lives, whereas students with strong aspirations may be more willing to persist despite socioeconomic, academic or environmental challenges. In Boki Local Government Area, therefore, schools, parents, teachers and education authorities should deliberately help students develop realistic educational and career aspirations through career guidance, mentoring, exposure to successful role models and information about emerging educational and occupational opportunities. Such interventions can help restore students' confidence in education as an instrument of personal advancement and community development. The finding also demonstrates that educational success should be understood beyond immediate academic achievement because the development of aspirations, ambition and future orientation represents an important component of preparing responsible, productive and future-ready citizens.

The third objective was to assess the influence of students' engagement on educational success. The result showed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between student engagement and educational success ($r = .624$, $p < .01$). The regression results equally indicated that student engagement significantly predicted educational success ($\beta = .286$, $p < .001$). Thus, students who actively participate in classroom activities, interact positively with teachers and peers, complete assignments, attend school regularly and demonstrate behavioural, emotional and cognitive involvement in learning are more likely to experience educational success. The multiple regression model further revealed that motivation, educational aspirations and engagement jointly explained 54.1% of the variance in educational success ($R = .736$, $R^2 = .541$), indicating that these variables constitute important determinants of students' educational outcomes, although 45.9% of the variation may be explained by other factors not included in the model. The findings collectively demonstrate that restoring trust in education requires more than improving physical infrastructure or curriculum content; it requires creating learning environments in which students are motivated, have meaningful aspirations and are actively engaged in their education. For Boki Local Government Area, this calls for learner-centred teaching practices, supportive teacher-student relationships, participatory classroom activities, extracurricular opportunities, effective counselling services, parental support and school leadership that encourages students' voices and participation. When students experience education as relevant, inclusive and responsive to their aspirations, they are more likely to develop the confidence, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, adaptability and lifelong-learning dispositions demanded by the knowledge economy. The overall findings therefore suggest that motivation, educational aspirations and engagement should be treated as interconnected foundations

for educational success and as strategic pathways for restoring public confidence in education and preparing future-ready citizens in contemporary Nigerian society.

5.1 Contribution to knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by providing context-specific insights into the relationship between students' motivation, educational aspirations, engagement and educational success in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. It advances the understanding of educational success by integrating these interconnected student-related factors within the broader discourse on restoring trust in education and preparing future-ready citizens for the knowledge economy. The study further highlights the importance of supportive school environments, meaningful educational opportunities and institutional responsiveness in strengthening students' commitment to learning and their confidence in education as a pathway to personal and societal development. Its findings are expected to provide locally relevant evidence for policymakers, school administrators, teachers and other educational stakeholders in designing strategies that promote student engagement, academic achievement, lifelong learning and the competencies required for active participation in contemporary society.

6 Conclusion

The study concludes that students' motivation, educational aspirations and engagement are important determinants of educational success among students in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings established that students' motivation has a significant positive influence on educational success, indicating that motivated students are more likely to demonstrate persistence, commitment and active participation in learning. The study also found a significant positive relationship between students' educational aspirations and educational success, suggesting that students who have clear and meaningful educational and career goals are more likely to attain better academic outcomes. Similarly, students' engagement was found to have a significant positive influence on educational success, demonstrating that active participation in classroom activities, school attendance, completion of academic tasks and involvement in learning contribute substantially to positive educational outcomes. Collectively, the findings underscore the need for schools, parents, teachers and education stakeholders in Boki Local Government Area to create supportive learning environments that strengthen students' motivation, nurture realistic educational aspirations and promote meaningful engagement. Such measures are essential for restoring confidence and trust in education while equipping students with the knowledge, skills, resilience and future orientation required to become productive, responsible and future-ready citizens in the contemporary knowledge economy.

7 Recommendations

The recommendations of this study were guided by the research findings:

7.1 Strengthening career guidance and mentorship programmes

Based on the objective of determining the relationship between students' educational aspirations and educational success, the study recommends that schools in Boki Local Government Area should strengthen career guidance and mentorship programmes. Qualified guidance counsellors, teachers, professionals and successful community members should be encouraged to mentor students and

help them develop realistic educational and career goals. Schools should regularly organize career talks, mentorship sessions, career exhibitions and orientation programmes that expose students to diverse educational pathways, professions and emerging opportunities in the knowledge economy. Such programmes should help students connect their present academic efforts with their future aspirations, thereby strengthening their commitment to education and improving educational success.

7.2 Provision of supportive learning environments and recognition systems

Based on the objective of examining the influence of students' motivation on educational success, the study recommends that schools and relevant education authorities should provide supportive, inclusive and stimulating learning environments that enhance students' motivation to learn. Teachers should employ learner-centred teaching strategies, provide constructive feedback, encourage students' participation and create classrooms where learners feel valued and supported. Schools should also establish appropriate recognition and reward systems, including academic awards, certificates, commendations and recognition of improvement, effort and creativity. Such measures can strengthen students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, encourage persistence in academic activities and contribute to improved educational success.

7.3 Strengthening parental, teacher and community support for student engagement

Based on the objective of assessing the influence of students' engagement on educational success, the study recommends increased parental, teacher and community support for students' active participation in learning. Parents should monitor their children's school attendance, assignments and academic progress while providing encouragement and conducive conditions for study at home. Teachers should promote active classroom participation through group work, discussions, practical activities, extracurricular programmes and other learner-centred approaches. Community leaders and relevant stakeholders should complement these efforts by supporting schools with learning resources, mentorship opportunities and educational initiatives. Strong collaboration among parents, teachers, schools and the wider community will enhance students' behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement and ultimately improve educational success in Boki Local Government Area.

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