

SELF-CONCEPT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of self-concept on academic performance of students of University of Calabar. A total of 396 students were sampled using stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square statistic. Result showed that self-concept has significant effect on academic performance of students in the University of Calabar. Specifically, result showed that academic self-concept, physical self-concept and moral self-concept have significant influence on test and examination scores of students in the University of Calabar. Based on the result, it is recommended that students should be motivated, encouraged and appreciated to raise the level of their self-concept for academic pursuit.

Key Words: Self-concept, Academic Performance, Students, University of Calabar

Introduction

The relationship between self-concept and academic performance has continued to be extensively studied over the years. Self-concept has been identified as a crucial factor that influences a person during the process of development, including educational achievement. Psychologists have confirmed the role of self-concept in bringing about achievement in many facets of life of a person. Self-concept is the set of attributes, abilities, attitudes and values that an individual believes define who he or she is (Berk, 2009). It is therefore the value that an individual places on his or her own characteristics, qualities, abilities and actions (Woolfolk, 2001).

It is upheld that excellent academic performance is the main target of every student and academic institutions. For excellent academic performance, a student should have an understanding of the subject content. This process of having an understanding of the subject content does not merely depend on memory work but on the attributes, abilities, attitudes and values which a learner possesses and employs in approaching academic work. These constitute how the learner ascribes to himself which may be termed self concept. Thus, a high level of positive self-concept with effective learning techniques will lead to excellent academic performance ((Yahaya, Hashim, Ramli, Boon & Hamdan, 2005).

Yahaya and Ramli (2009) defined self-concept as the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence. Sanchez and Rodá (2007) considered self-concept as the set of features, attributes, deficiencies and qualities, limits and capacities, values and relationships that subject knows to be descriptive about its own and which he perceives as data concerning his identity. Yahaya and Jaafar (2005) stated that the establishment of one's self concepts is built by the person's nature, maturity, and his natural surroundings. According to Yahaya, Ramli, Boon, Ghaffar and Zakariya (2009), self-concept is important in determining someone's personality. There are three important components in forming self-concept that is self-awareness, self-acceptance which means the reciprocal feelings between him and others, and his judgment due to the acceptance of others.

It is obvious that some students have positive self-concept, which makes them to be involved actively in the process of learning, while some other students have negative self-concept which could make them not to take active part in class activities. Negative self-concept distorts communication and makes a student not to respond to questions for fear that they will be assessed by their teachers and peers especially if their opinion is not accurate and fails to meet the teacher's requirements (Martinot, Delphine & Jean-Marc Monteil, 2000).

According to Hijazi and Naqvi (2006), the concept of academic performance is multifaceted, comprising attitudes, behaviours, skills possessed by a learner that contributes to the classroom academic success. Pandey (2008) considered academic performance as the achievement of the students in the subjects they study in the school. Tinto (1993) held that academic performance is a superior and satisfactory level of performance of students as they go higher and completed their schooling. Ampofo and Osei-Owusu (2015) stated that student academic performance is the degree to which a student is able to accomplish a given class works in the school setting.

Studies such as Cokley and Patel (2007), Jen and Chien (2008), Bacon (2011) and Ghazvini (2011) on the relationship between academic self-concept and academic performance found that academic self-concept has a positive relationship with academic performance/achievement. Furthermore, studies such as **Faezeh and Masoumeh (2013), Dambudzo and Schulze (2013)** on the relationship between physical self-concept and students' academic performance and found that **physical self-concept has significant relationship with learners' academic performance/achievement.** On the other hand, Asma-Tuz-Zahra (2010) found that physical self-concept was unrelated to academic achievement.

Equally, studies carried out by Tsang (2001), Todd (2001), and Colquhoun and Bourne (2012) evaluated the influence of moral self-concept on academic performance and found that there is a positive correlation between moral self-concept and academic performance. A study by **Yahaya and Boon (2009)** found no significant relationship between **moral self-concept** and student's academic achievement. From the review, it is observed that studies on the effect of self-concept and academic performance are probably nonexistent in the University of Calabar. This study therefore fills the gap by examining the effect of self-concept on academic performance of students in the University of Calabar.

The theoretical underpinning of this study is the social comparison theory. The social

comparison theory was developed by Festinger (1954). The theory holds that individuals usually evaluate themselves by making comparison with others in a biased situation. By comparing themselves with others, an individual's self-confidence can be elevated leading to self-improvement. The theory however states that by comparing oneself with others who perform better than they do, an individual's self-concept can decline. The theory assumes that there is a positive relationship between achievement and self-concept for the same subject and a negative relationship between achievement and self-concept for different subjects. The theory holds that an individual undergoes two processes of comparison (internal and external) in order to construct his/her self-concept based on the social comparison theory (Marsh, 1990). Thus, the theory held that the formation of self-concept based on subjects is affected by both internal and external comparison processes (Hung, 2007).

Thus, whether self-concept has led to academic achievement remains a debate that needs to be settled through research investigation. The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of self-concept on academic performance of students of the University of Calabar. The specific objective is to examine the effect of academic self-concept, physical self-concept and moral self-concept on academic performance of students of the University of Calabar. The hypothesis that would be tested subsequently in this study is that self-concept (academic, physical and moral) has no significant effect on academic performance of students of the University of Calabar.

Research methods

The research design used in this study is the survey design. For the purpose of this study, the sample survey adopted is aimed at collecting sample from the population in order to examine the relationship between self-concept and academic performance among students of the University of Calabar.

The study area is the University of Calabar. Available information from the University of Calabar web site showed that there are an estimated total of 40,645 students who have enrolled to study in the institution. The population for this study includes all students in the various departments of the various faculties in the institution and the graduate school.

The sample for this study was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula. Stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 396 students from the various faculties and departments in the University of Calabar.

A well-structured questionnaire was used in collecting data for this study. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A contains information regarding respondents' personal characteristics and sections B contains information pertaining to objectives of our subject of study based on the hypothesis to be tested. The measuring instrument is a four-point Likert scale-type questionnaire [strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD)]. The measuring instrument was subject to rigorous scrutiny to ascertain both its validity and reliability. The data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages and inferential statistic of the Chi-square test. The Chi-Square (χ^2) test can be expressed algebraically using the formula below:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(OF - EF)^2}{EF}$$

Where: χ^2 = Chi-Square statistics; OF = Observed frequency; EF = Expected frequency

Data Analysis

Gender Composition of the Respondents

Table 4.1 summarizes respondents by gender. The data as shown in Table 1 indicated that 200 (50.5 percent) of the total respondents were male students, while 196 (49.5 percent) of the total sample were female students.

Table 1 Gender Classification of the Respondents

Gender	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Male	200	50.5
Female	196	49.5
Total	396	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Age Composition of Respondents

Table 2 summarized respondents according to their age brackets. The results as presented in Table 2 showed that 180 (45.4 per cent) of the respondents were in the 15 – 24 age bracket; 120 (30.3 per cent) of the respondents were within the 25 – 34 age bracket; 64 (16.2 percent) of the respondents were in the 35 – 44 age bracket; while 32 (8.1 present) of the total sample were 45 years and above.

Table 2: Age Composition of the Respondents

Age	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)
15 – 24	180	45.4
25 – 34	224	30.3
35 – 44	48	16.2
45 and above	24	8.1
Total	396	100

Source: Field survey, 2021

Classification of respondents by degree in view

Table 3 summarized the respondents according to their degree in view. The results as indicated in Table 3 showed that 100 (25.2 per cent) of the total respondents were Diploma students; 224 (56.6 per cent) of the total respondents were Undergraduate students; 48 (12.1 per cent) of the respondents were Masters Students, while 24 (6.1 per cent) of the total sample was PhD candidates.

Table 3: Classification of respondents by degree in view

Degree in view	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Diploma	100	25.2
B.SC/BA/BED	224	56.6
M.Sc	48	12.1
Ph.D	24	6.1
Total	396	100

Source: Field survey, 2021

Analysis of result

This section analyses result by conducting test of hypothesis to validate or invalidate the earlier formulated hypothesis. The test is conducted using the Chi – square statistical analysis.

Hypothesis: Self-concept has no significant effect on academic performance of students in the University of Calabar.

Table 5: Chi-square analysis of the effect of self-concept on academic performance of students

Self-concept variables	Calculated X^2	Critical X^2	df
Academic self-concept	161.21	7.81	3
Physical self-concept	71.21	7.81	3
Moral self-concept	79.92	7.81	3

Level of significance = 0.05

Source: Field survey 2021

The result as shown in table 5 indicated that the calculated x^2 values of 161.21, 71.21 and 79.92 for academic self-concept, physical self-concept and moral self-concept, respectively are all greater than the critical value of 7.81 at the five percent level of significance with 3 degree of freedom. Based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, self-concept has significant effect on academic performance of students in the University of Calabar.

The significant effect of academic self-concept on academic performance is in line with findings obtained by Chien (2008), Asma-Tuz-Zahra (2010) and Ghazvini (2011). The conclusion from these aforementioned studies is that there was a significant relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement. Similarly, the significant effect of physical self-concept on academic performance is in agreement with findings by Faezeh and Masoumeh (2013) and Dambudzo and Schulze (2013). In their studies, the authors showed that physical self-concept matters in learners' academic achievement. Lastly, the significant effect of moral self-concept on academic performance is consistent with finding by Colquhoun and Bourne (2012) who found that there is a positive link between moral self-concept and academic performance.

Conclusion

This study was undertaken to examine the influence of self-concept on academic performance of students in the University of Calabar, Cross River State. Result of this study showed that self-concept has significant effect on academic performance of students in the University of Calabar. Specifically, result showed that academic self-concept, physical self-concept and moral self-concept have significant influence on academic performance of students in the University of Calabar by enhancing their performance in class test and examination scores.

Based on the result, it is expected that teachers and lecturers should engage students in both academic and non-academic activities to raise their self-worth and self-esteem. Teachers/lecturers should counsel and guide student always to prevent the state of despair. Furthermore, teachers/lecturers should encourage and appreciate efforts of students in learning so as to boost their self-confidence in academic activities. Meanwhile, parents have a part to play by motivating, encouraging and appreciating efforts made by their wards towards academic pursuit. Furthermore, extra-curricular activities such as sporting activities should be regular in schools to keep students body and mind sound for academic performance. Lastly, students should be encouraged to exhibit good morals such as hard work, obedience, humility, honesty, respect, etc. These are ingredients of good behaviour that aid academic achievement.

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