

# The Relationship Between Shyness, Self-Esteem, Coping Skills and Academic Performance in the Offinso College of Education

Augustine Adjei

M.Phil./ M.Ed. Offinso College of Education, Ghana- West Africa

## Abstract

The study examined the relationship between shyness, self-esteem, coping skills and academic performance. The sample was made up of 35 males and 29 females, the shy students were purposively sampled from level 100 and 200 Teacher-trainees. Data collected was analyzed using the Chi-Square test and Pearson's product-moment correlation. A positive relationship was found between shyness and academic performance ( $r=37, p<0.1$ ), thus, the hypothesis was supported. However, there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance ( $r=23, p=ns$ ), the hypothesis was therefore not supported. Per the Chi-Square test revealed no significant relationship between academic performance and coping skills  $X^2 (2.60-4.019, p=1, 34 ns)$  Per the Chi-Square test, revealed insignificant relation between self-esteem and academic performance  $X^2 (2, 35) = 1.539, P=.463 (ns)$ , thus, the hypothesis was not supported. The school Counsellor in collaboration with the classroom teachers should interact with their students to identify and help solve their psychological learning problems. The school Counsellor should provide educational guidance, vocational guidance and psychological counselling, and other measures to help individual students with shyness and its related problems.

**Keywords:** Shyness, Self-esteem and Coping Skills

## Introduction

As human as we are, we have different people with different personality traits. Some of these traits may be welcomed or rejected by society depending upon where and how they are exhibited and their intensity and effects on the individual. Some of these traits may be hereditary, or environmental. Shyness can be explained as the avoidance to doing something because you are not confident enough or you are worried or nervous about Mangione and Speth, (1998). Children especially have shyness in them; they tend to display a generally negative pattern of self-perception, including low efficacy and low social expectations. They are often characterized as shy and withdrawn.

## Shyness

Shyness involves the tendency to feel worried, awkward or tensed when in the presence of others due to the prospect of interpersonal evaluation (Buss, 1980; Cheek, Melchoir & Carpentien, 1986) there are a lot of things people who are shy most at times cannot do which has a telling effect on them in their social life. Typical example is their inability to withstand crowd, they also have the difficulty of thinking of things to say when called upon to execute a task in public. Reports indicate that shy persons only go out if they can drink; they use this as a self-defeating coping skill that often accompanies this disorder (Zimbardo, 1977a)

Although negative consequences of shyness are pronounced, the phenomenon of shyness and shy behaviour has not been much in Ghana. However, researchers (Pikonis, 1977; Zimbardo, Pikonis & Norwood, 1974), have successfully reported the prevalence of shyness through their scientific studies. Zimbardo, (1974), studied subjects from Japan, Taiwan, Hawaii, Israel, Mexico, India and North America and found that across all populations studied, 40% of the people considered themselves to be "presently shy" while over 80% reported that they had been "dispositionally shy"

## Self-esteem

Self-esteem involves the degree to which individuals positively regard themselves (Sonstroem & Shavelson, 1989) self-esteem is regarded as a multidimensional construct (Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988), which can be assessed within specific domains, such as academic self-esteem (Crozier, 1995). Results from research have consistently indicated negative relations between shyness and self-esteem (eg. Cheek & Melchior, 1990; Crozier, 1981, 1995, Lawrence & Bennett, 1992; Lazarus, 1982; Miller, 1995). For example, Crozier (1995), reported that shyness was significantly negatively correlated with scholastic competence, social competence and global self-worth in a sample of young adolescents

It is presumed that doubts about one's ability to contribute effectively to social interactions, coupled with fears of being negatively evaluated by others, could contribute to the inhibited behaviour and social anxiety that characterize the behavioural and somatic manifestations of shyness (Crozier, 1995) Additionally, subsequent self-derogatory cognitions may then have a negative impact on self-esteem (Bruch et al., 1995; Crozier, 1995) Leary, (1992) argued that the school must try to eliminate anything that might create a variety of negative images by students when they are worried about being evaluated by others. This fear of evaluation could be an issue in

academic performance. Quite possibly, a student who is shy and who is generally worried about being negatively evaluated may not feel good about herself and may suffer from low academic self-esteem

### **Coping Skills**

Coping skills is one's ability to deal effectively or successfully with a situation. Coping skills refer to the specific efforts both behavioural and psychological that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful effects (Mattin, Wethington, & Kessler, 1990) Many researchers who have studied subjects at midterms or finals and have found that coping is clearly a complex process, influenced by both personality characteristics (Bolger, 1990; Fileman, 1992; Long & Sangster, 1993), situation demands (Folkman & Lazarus, 1986; Heim, 1993), and even the social and physical characteristics of the setting (Mechanic, 1978) it is therefore imperative that teachers, school Counsellors and school authorities be abreast with some of these problems especially shy students and try to help them adjust very well social and to their academic pursuits.

### **The Relationship Between Shyness and Academic Performance**

Shyness was related to higher levels of self-reported somatic anxiety. The results was not surprising considering the numerous investigations that have linked shyness to anxious physiology (eg.Kagan, Reznick & Snidman, 1987; Schmidt & Shulkin, 1999) Researches in shyness have suggested that shy individual have a lower threshold for physiological arousal in the face of novel or challenging stimuli as compared to their non- shy counterparts (Schmidt & Shulkin, 1999) More specifically, shy individuals have been found to have higher cortisol levels (Gunnar, Mangelsdorf, Larson & Hertgard, 1996; Kagan et. al., 1989), greater sympathetic nervous system activity (Schmidt, Calkins, Rubin & Coplan, 1996), when compared to non-shy individuals. Thus, there seems to be consensus in the literature that shyness can be associated with distinct physiological characteristics. On the other hand, students who are extremely shy may also experience difficulties in their ability to performing well academically with their peers. Teachers and school authorities should cater for individual work and individual assignments in order to highlight individual potentialities (Martens, Vealey & Burton, 1990).

In a study that investigated the connection among shyness and scholastic achievement, social popularity (teacher ratings), and parental educational level of 247 Chinese Shanhair and 227 Swiss primary school children in the fourth grade. Teacher-rated shyness correlated negatively with scholastic achievement and popularity not only for Swiss girls and boys, but also for Chinese girls. No correlations were found for Chinese boys. The opposite pattern was found in the Chinese sample. The question may be rated whether shyness itself, or rather the negative connotations attributed to shyness in Western world, put shy children at a disadvantage scholastically (Muijs, 1997)

### **The Relationship Between Coping Skills and Academic Performance**

Coping skills refer to the efforts both behavioural and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful effects. An additional distention that is often made in the coping literature is between active and avoidant coping skills. Active coping strategies their behavioural or psychological responded designed to change the nature of the stressor itself or how one thinks about it, whereas avoidant coping strategies lead people into activities (such as alcohol use) or mental states (such as withdrawal) that keep them from directly addressing stressful events. Generally speaking, active coping skills, whether behavioural or emotional, are thought to be better to deal with stressful counts, avoidant coping strategies appear to be a psychological risk factor to respond to stressful like events (Holahau & Novs, 1987).

There have been some research results to suggest that coping with stress may reduce levels of shyness expressed by both children and adults. For example, Deffenbacher, Lynch, Oetting and Kemper, (1996), found out that a treatment programme consisting of cognitive relaxation techniques coupled with task-oriented coping skills training lowered levels of shyness in children in grades six to eight. Moreover, Flangan (1990), emphasized the importance of equipping individuals with self-knowledge and personal coping skills in order to reduce their psychological difficulty that may be expressed in the in the development of phobias, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorders and shyness, to name a few. In my view, a positive psychological coping skills may reduce the impact of shyness factors, such as self-esteem or levels of performance.

### **The Gender Differences in the Exhibition of Shyness**

Research into the social behaviour of school children has long yielded convincing evidence of negative consequences resulting from a lack of peer relationships. In comparison to the state of research regarding externalizing and aggressive behavioural patterns (Parker & Abher, 1987; Cilessen, Van Ljzendoem, Van Lieshout & Hartup, 1992; Stockli, 1997), less is known about the roles of shyness or social inhibition in the context of difficulties adapting to social and school situations (Asendorpt, 1986; Crozier,2001; Leary & Kowalski), existed which demonstrate significant consequences and side effects of social inhibition in school age

children when considering these issues, gender differences, should be noted.

In a long-term study conducted by Caspi, Elder and Ben (1988), they found relationship between shyness in childhood and coping with various developmental tests in adulthood. As grownups, shy boys had, among other things, delayed access to a stable career path and to marriage and fatherhood, but no psychopathological problems. No such delays manifested themselves with shy girls. A comparison study in Sweden produced similar findings (Kerr, Lambert & Ben, 1996), with the difference that shy boys in this case suffered no career setbacks. As grownups, on the other hand, shy girls achieved a lower educational level as their non-shy counterparts.

In regard to certain correlation of shyness and social inhibition, gender differences are in fact already present in childhood. In a sample survey of 3-6 year-olds, Mayr (1992) found negative correlations between shyness and socio-metric nominations by peers strictly with boys four years or older. Shy boys received fewer positive motivations, but no more rejection than their non-shy counterparts. On the other hand, shyness did not affect the girls' nomination. In a longitudinal section study by Bowen, Vitaro, Kerr and Pelletier (1995), it turned out that shyness as rated by Kindergarten classmates of the same age likewise was a predictor for internalizing problems in the fifth grade.

As these studies demonstrated, I also think that shy-socially inhibited behaviours are manifested primarily by boys, to their disadvantage. Shyness contradicts the male stereotype more than the female stereotype. Boys must therefore not only deal with their own social inhibition, but also with a lack of social recognition. Under the circumstances, the self-conscious behaviour can even evoke somewhat negative reactions from peers. Such reactions to boys with a typical characteristics increase particularly during the primary school years (Carters & McCloskey, 1984).

### **The Relationship Between Self-esteem and Academic Performance**

Peer interactions provide opportunities for children to learn important social skills (eg. Rubin, Bukowski & Parker, 1998), Shy children are often thought to be at a disadvantage for the development of these essential social skills due to their limited social interactions. Researchers have speculated that shy children who have underdeveloped social skills may eventually become aware of their shortcoming and may develop feelings of low perceived competence. Indeed, research on shyness has revealed negative associations with self-esteem and self-worth in later childhood and adolescence (eg. Crozier, 1995; Hymel, Woody & Bowker, 1993; Rubin, Chen & Hymel, 1993).

Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976), define self-esteem as person's perception of himself or herself that is formed through experiences with the environment and influenced especially by environmental reinforcements and significant others. This definition emphasizes the influence of significant others in the formation of self-concept and self-esteem. In a school setting, the most significant of significant others are probably the teacher and classmates whose support or non-support from an individual student's academic pursuit is likely to have a significant impact on the student's interest in schoolwork, self-esteem as a student, and academic performance. However, the literature on self-concept research seems to have suggested that the teacher is likely to be the least effective agent of change in enhancing academic achievement beyond family variable (Scarr & Thompson, 1994). Recent research on self-concept has established a close relation between academic self-esteem and academic achievement and behaviours. Byrne (1984), has suggested that self-esteem may have motivational properties that may facilitate change in academic achievement. In a longitudinal study, Marsh and Yeung (1997a), have demonstrated that academic achievement had substantial effects on subsequent academic self-concept and that academic self-esteem also had substantial effects on subsequent academic achievement. This reciprocal relation between academic self-esteem and achievement has also been supported by other researchers (Hay, 1997; Muijs, 1997; Yeung & Lee, in press). Furthermore, Marsh and Yeung (1997b), also showed that self-concept had significant effects on high school students and selection of coursework (also see Yeung, Chui, & Lau, in press). Student's self-esteem is therefore both an important educational outcome and an important factor other desirable outcome (Marsh, 1983).

Whereas recent research has focused on self-esteem in specific curriculum domains (Byrne & Gavin, 1986; Marsh, 1986 & Shavelson, 1985; Marsh & Yeung, 1997a, 1997b), the construct of self-esteem has been more loosely defined. Self-esteem is usually taken as a context-free perception of the self and should be representative of an overall description and evaluation of the self. It is typically measured by a set of response items that self-esteem as a context-free construct may not be as stable as has been assumed. In three studies, Marsh and Yeung (in press), demonstrated that measures of self-esteem tend to assume the nature of the other measures within which the self-esteem items are embedded. Thus, self-esteem items became more physical when embedded within a physical context but became more academic when embedded within an academic context. This "chameleon effect" of self-esteem (Marsh & Yeung, in press), suggest that self-esteem as a measured construct can hardly be really context-free. As Shavelson, (1976; also see Coppersmith & Feldman, 1974), have pointed out, an individual's perceptions are likely to be influenced by environmental reinforcements and significant others; and beliefs of whether a particular curriculum is important or not are often derived from

success from the school environment and significant others, such as parents, teachers, and peers. Thus, whether the beliefs and expectancies of a student are supported by significant others is likely to have an important impact on the perhaps other educational outcomes.

### **Research Design**

The survey design was used. The researcher chose this paradigm because the study involved a survey of a cross section of students at the Offinso College of Education at finding the relationship between shyness, self-esteem, coping skills and academic performance. Alonge (2010), posited that, the design that uses survey to obtain a description of a particular group of individuals is called the survey research design. The goal of the survey design is to obtain an accurate picture of the individuals being studied. It provides a “snapshot” of the group at a particular time. The use of the survey design is very necessary for this study even though it has some setbacks such as the potential for interviewer bias, especially when close ended questions are used. Secondly, it can be time consuming. Also, it can be expensive, as a consequence of these setbacks, the survey can have low response rate and non-response bias, its numerous advantages cannot be overemphasized. Some of these advantages are that: It is convenient and anonymous. It is non-threatening to participants. It is easy to administer. It is efficient to administer with groups. Participants can stay at their homes or offices and respond to the questionnaires. It was also added that survey design is appropriate for research that aims at seeking people’s views about issues, events, policies and others. He further opined that, a survey allows the collection of data that may be used to access current practices and conditions and make plans to improve them.

### **Population**

Population refers to the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. It must be noted that whatever the basic unit, the population always comprises the entire aggregation of elements in which the researcher is interested (Alonge, 2010; p.49-54). In the case of this study, the population was student-trainees of Offinso College of Education while the target population comprised of all level 100 and 200 Teacher- trainees from Offinso College of Education. There were seven hundred (700) Teacher-trainees in all.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

Sample consists of a carefully selected subset of the units that comprise the population. Sampling is thus the process of choosing the units of the target population which are to be included in the study. In sampling, the units that make up the samples and population are referred to as elements. The element is the most basic unit about which information is collected. In social research, the elements are usually humans (Alonge, 2010; p. 49-54). The sample consisted of sixty four (64) Teacher-trainees which included 35 male and 29 female students. The elements were purposively and randomly selected from each class till the researcher attained the required number of sixty four (64) sample size.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

The instrument used was a likert scale questionnaire, made up of four parts, namely section A, B, C, D, and E. Section A consisted of the demographic information about the participants namely, age, sex, socioeconomic background, position in class and their forms. Section B consisted of standardized questionnaire, which is the shyness scale, section C, consisted of a self-esteem scale, section D also consisted of a coping skills questionnaire and section E consisted of academic performance scale. All the items except in section A, were structured. Each of the items in the questionnaire consisted of an open statement, which was followed side-by-side by a list of four optional responses. The responses were structured in the likert-scale format and include: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). They were also assigned numerical weight of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The respondents were instructed to select the option most appropriate to them and that corresponds to their opinion about the statement provided.

### **Validity and Reliability**

A standardized shyness, self-esteem and coping scale by Cheek J.M. & Buss, A. H., made up of thirteen items were adopted (Questionnaire) based on experience and to reflect the dependent and independent variables and also based on literature reviewed, purpose of study and research hypotheses. In addition, the questionnaire were given to my colleagues in the Education Department to go through and other two experts in the University of Education, Winneba to read through and offered the necessary advice where possible. They helped to correct all errors, corrected and refined its content in line with the research topic, purpose of study and research hypotheses. They modified certain aspects and suggested other areas of improvement where necessary. Their suggestions and corrections were effected. All the corrections helped to ensure that the instruments were close to perfection and was of high content, construct and face validities.

### Method for Data Collection

Permission was sought from the Principal of Offinso College of Education as well as the Head of Department of Education. The researcher used only levels 100 and 200 Teacher-trainees with the sample size being sixty four (64). The questionnaire was administered on the respondents partly by the researcher and partly by some colleague tutors. It was administered on teacher-trainees on campus at the Offinso College of Education.

### Method of Data Analysis

In the course of answering the questionnaire, three students for whatever reason did not attempt to answer it at all. Few of the questionnaires (5) got missing as some students did not return them. The researcher had to print new copies to make up the number. A Likert scale on shyness with a five-response choices ranging from Strongly Disagree= 1, Don't Agree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4 and Strongly Agree=5. Thus a score ranging from 36 and 65 means the student is experiencing shyness. A score ranging from 0 and 35 means the student less experience shyness. A Likert scale on self-esteem had a four (4) response choices ranging from Strongly Agree=4, Agree=3, Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1. Ranging between 20 and 40 means students have high self-esteem while between 0 and 20 indicates low self-esteem.

A Likert scale on coping skills had a four (4) response choices ranging from 48 and 95 means that students have high coping ability. A score ranging from 0 and 45 means poor coping ability. Students' performances based on their positions in class were used. The subjects considered included; Core Mathematics, Core English, Social studies, Integrated Science and Ghanaian Language. SPSS version 16.0 was used to analyze the entire data. Per Chi-Square and the Pearson's product moment test were used for the results.

## RESULTS

In all, four hypotheses were tested using the correlated t-test, the Chi-Square test and Pearson's product moment correlation. The Pearson's product moment correlation was used because the data was captured on a four point scale which gave a ratio data (parametric test). The highest possible score for shyness on the CBSS-r is a score of 65. The shyness scores for the present sample ranged from a minimum score of 23 to a maximum score of 61. The mean shyness score for this sample was 47.78 (SD=9.77), indicating that on the average the students were "somewhat shy".

### Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N (%)
Sex	
Male	35 (54.7%)
Female	29 (45.3%)
Total	<b>64 (100%)</b>

### Age (Years)

Range	19 – 32
Form	
Level 100	25 (39.0625%)
Level 200	39 (60.9375%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>64 (100%)</b>

The table above indicates that, out of 64 students, 35 were male and 29 were females. In all, 64 students were drawn from levels 100 and 200 with 25 from level 100 and 39 from level 200. The age range is from fifteen (19) to thirty-two (32)

### Hypothesis one

H<sub>1</sub>. It was hypothesized that there will be a relationship between shyness and self-esteem, self-esteem and academic performance and academic performance and shyness. The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to test these hypotheses. Below is a summary of the test results on table 1.

Table 2: Summary of Means, Standard Deviation and Correlation Coefficient of Self Esteem, Shyness and Academic Performance.

No.	Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3
1	Self-esteem	13.7500	4.82388			
2	Shyness	47.7812	9.76789	-.736***		
3	Academic performance	7.3281	2.39082	-.236	.369**	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), n=64

For hypothesis one, the Pearson correlation coefficient shown on table 1 above revealed a negative significant correlation between shyness and self-esteem ( $r = -.74, P < .01$ ). Also, a positive significant relationship

was found between shyness and academic performance ( $r=.37, P<0.1$ ), thus, the two hypotheses were supported. However, there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance ( $r= -.23, P=ns$ ) the hypothesis was not supported.

### Hypothesis two

**H<sub>2</sub>** It was hypothesized that; there will be a relationship between type of coping strategy and academic performance. Across tabulation and Chi-Square results of type of coping strategy and academic performance is shown on table 3 below

**Coping Strategy \* Academic Performance Category Cross tabulation**

		Academic performance category		Total
		High academic Performance	Low academic Performance	
Coping strategy	escape avoidance:-	3	10	13
	Count % within academic performance category	11.1%	30.3%	21.7%
Problem focus:-	Count % within academic performance category	8	5	13
	Count % within academic performance category	29.6%	15.2%	21.7%
Emotion focus:-	Count % within academic performance category	16	18	34
	Count % within academic performance category	54.5%	59.3%	56.7%
Total:-	Count % within academic performance category	27	33	60
	Count % within academic performance category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$$X^2(2,60) = 4.019, p= .134 (ns)$$

Results on table 3 above shows that, of the 27 students with high academic performance, 11.1% used escape avoidance coping strategy, 29.6% used problem focused and 54.5% used emotion focused. Of the 33 students with low academic performance, 30.3% used escape avoidance coping strategies, 59.3% used emotion focused coping strategy. Per the Chi-Square test, the observed difference was not significant  $X^2(2, 60)=4.019, P= .134$  (ns). Therefore the hypothesis was not supported.

### Hypothesis three

**H<sub>3</sub>** The third hypothesis stated that; male students with low academic performance will rate low on self-esteem than females with low academic. A cross tabulation and Chi-Square results of sex differences of low performers and self-esteem are shown on table 4 below.

Table 4: Cross tabulation of sex and self-esteem among low academic performance

		Self-esteem categorized			Total	
		Low self-esteem	normal	high self-esteem		
Sex	male	Count % Within self-esteem categorized	13	14	0	17
	Count % Within self-esteem categorized	54.2%	40.0%	.0%	48.6%	
female	Count % Within self-esteem categorized	11	6	1	18	
	Count % Within self-esteem categorized	45.8%	60.0%	100%	51.4%	

$$X^2(2, 35) = 1.539$$

Results on table four shows that, of the twenty-four (24) students with low self-esteem, 54.2% were males and 45.3% were females. Per the Chi-Square test, the observed difference was not significant  $X^2(2,35) = 1.539$ ,  $P = .463$  (ns), thus, the hypothesis was not supported

In this study, four hypotheses were formulated. Three out of the total of four were not supported while the other one was supported. Hypothesis one states that shy students with a low self-esteem will perform poorly. The standard deviation and Pearson correlation coefficient of self-esteem, shyness and academic performance related a significant mean difference between the mean scores of self-esteem, shyness and academic performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient showed a negative significant correlation between shyness and self-esteem. This means that the higher the level of shyness, the lower the self-esteem and the lower the level of shyness, the higher the self-esteem, students who score high on shyness tend to have a very low self-esteem and those who scored low on shyness tend to have a higher self-esteem.

Also, a positive significant relationship was found between shyness and academic performance. This means that the higher the levels of shyness, the higher the academic performance, meaning students who are shy tend to perform well academically, the relationship although positive is not very strong and vice versa. This means that the two hypotheses were supported. However, there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. The indication is that, self-esteem whether high or low has no relationship or association with academic performance that is self-esteem has no bearing on how a person will perform academically.

The second hypothesis was that there will be a relationship between type of coping strategy and academic performance. In case of students who used the emotion focus count coping strategy, sixteen students and eighteen students respectively have a mean being more than fifty percent. Here, the implication is that those who used this coping strategy to combat their level of shyness could not perform very well. On other hand, those students who adopted the problem focus count coping strategy have a mean percentage being more than twenty percent. This therefore suggests that, it depends on the type of coping skill strategy used; one can still perform well or poorly academically. Generally speaking, active coping strategies, whether behaviour or emotional, are thought to be better to deal with stressful and avoidant coping strategies appear to be a psychological risk factor too stressful like events (Holahau & Novs, 1987).

Flanagan (1990), emphasized the importance of equipping individuals with self-knowledge and personal coping skills in order to reduce their psychological difficulty that may be express in the development of phobias, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorders and shyness, to name a few. Whereas a positive psychological coping style may reduce levels of shyness, it is also possible that being equipped with this type of coping style may reduce the impact that shyness has on factors, such as self-esteem or levels of performance which supports the hypothesis.

The third hypothesis stated that male students with low academic performance will rate low on self-esteem than female with low academic performance. A cross tabulation and Chi-Square results of sex difference of low performance and self-esteem are shown on table 4.

Results on the table showed that, students with low self-esteem had males more than the females. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported. This means there is no difference in the self-esteem of males with low academic performance and that of female with poor academic, thus, any differences observed may be due to chance. Recent research on self-esteem has established a close relation between academic self-concept and academic achievement and behaviours. Byrne, (1984), has suggested that self-concept may have motivational properties that may facilitate change in academic achievement. However, in a longitudinal study, Marsh and Yeung, (1997), have demonstrated that academic achievement had substantial effects on subsequent academic self-concept and that academic self-concept also had substantial effects on subsequent academic achievement.

This reciprocal relation between academic self-concept and achievement has also been supported by other researchers (Hay, 1997 & Muijs, 1997). Furthermore, Marsh and Yeung, (1997b), also showed that self-concept had significant effects on high school students, selection of coursework. Student's self-concept is therefore both an essential educational outcome and an important factor that may facilitate other desirable outcomes (Marsh, 1983).

### Summary of the Results

In hypothesis one, it was hypothesized that; there will be a relationship shyness and self-esteem, self-esteem and academic performance and shyness. The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used. It revealed a negative correlation. The hypothesis was therefore not supported

It was also hypothesized in hypothesis two that; there will be a relationship between type of coping strategy and academic performance. A cross tabulation and Chi-Square was used. Per Chi-Square test revealed a non-significant correlation. Therefore the hypothesis was not supported.

The third hypothesis stated that; male students with low academic performance will rate low on self-esteem than females with low academic performance. A cross tabulation and Chi-Square was used. Per Chi-Square test revealed that the difference was not significant, the hypothesis was not supported.

## Conclusion

The findings of the study indicated that, on the average, the students (sample size) were 'somewhat shy'. The study also revealed:

- A negative significant correlation between shyness and self-esteem which means that the higher the level of shyness, the lower the self-esteem and the lower the level of shyness, the higher the self-esteem.
- Positive significant relationship was found between shyness and academic performance and this supported the hypothesis. This means the higher the level of shyness, the higher the academic performance, meaning student who are shy tend to perform well academically, the relationship although positive is not very strong and vice versa.
- There was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. This means self-esteem whether low or high has no association with performance, that is, self-esteem has no bearing on how a person will perform academically. The hypothesis was therefore not supported.
- There was a negative relationship between sex and self-esteem among low academic performance. This means there is no difference in the self-esteem of males with low academic performance and that of females with poor academic performance, thus any differences observed may be due to chance
- That the observed difference was not significant, meaning that the hypothesis was not supported. This means that one's ability to cope may not have any negative influence on his academic performance.

## Recommendations

Poor academic performance is not only a pathetic situation but also a waste of human resources, when education is being considered as bedrock for proper national development. This does not happen by chance. It is as a result of the conditions our students go through without anybody to help them out. Shyness, low self-esteem and poor coping skills cannot be left out. To this end, in the veins of the conclusion made for this study, the following measures are recommended for consideration and possible implementation.

- Students should be put into ability groups where they can benefit from remedial teachings
- Trained Counsellors should be accepted and posted to schools/Colleges to help find solutions to problems of both teachers and shy students.
- Heads/Principals of educational institutions are to organize regular in-service training programmes for Teachers/Tutors to enable them improve upon how to cater for individual differences in the lecture/classroom situations.
- School/College authorities and Teachers are to develop positive attitudes towards shy students and not pass judgmental comments about their behaviours so as not to worsen their psycho-emotional state.
- Co-curriculum activities like soccer, athletics and other indoor games should be organized and encourage in schools to involve shy students so as to avert or reduce shyness among students.
- Tutors/Teachers in classrooms/lecture theatres are to involve students in group activities and keep students who are shy as group leaders and this will go a long way to reduce their level of shyness.

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