

THE INFLUENCE OF SELF-CONCEPT ON SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT: OF WHAT CONCERN IS IT TO THE COUNSELLORS?

BRUNO U. ONYEKURU AND MARY ZURU

(Received 1, August 2016; Revision Accepted 19, January 2017)

ABSTRACT

This correlational study investigated the relationship between self-concept and school adjustment using a sample of 610 students drawn from a population of 1983 senior secondary school (two) students from Nembe town of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were designed to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested at probability level of 0.05. The instrument for data collection was Self-concept and School Adjustment Scale. It was validated by the assistance of two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and possessed sufficient reliability indices to be used in the study. The data generated from the instrument were analyzed using SPSS (version 21). The results of the study showed that social self-concept and academic self-concept had high positive joint influence on school adjustment of secondary school students; the joint influence of self-concept on school adjustment is significant at 0.05 level of probability; social self-concept and academic self-concept each has a high positive and significant individual influence on the school adjustment of the students. Based on these findings, the conclusion drawn was that social self-concept and academic self-concept had joint and separate significant relationships with school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town. The counsellors should concern themselves on how to make the students believe in themselves; they should not be afraid of any subjects or tasks and that they can surmount any academic or life challenges by putting in adequate effort.

KEYWORDS: Social self-concept, academic self-concept, school adjustment, confidence, success, failure.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge acquired through experiences is cumulative. Intensity, frequency and consistency of successes or failures experienced by an individual over time frame conspire to influence development of confidence in the person. Frequent and consistent failures can result to a drop in confidence while frequent and consistent successes result to increased level of confidence. A good measure of level of confidence of an individual is the self-concept.

Self-concept is the self-assessment, awareness and insight one has about oneself (Hornum, 2010). It is the aggregation of thoughts, beliefs and opinions an individual has about himself as a person, his skills, competence, appearance and personal achievement and acceptance. It comprises thoughts, feeling, attitudes and awareness of a person about himself/herself (Woolfolk, Hughes & Walkup, 2007). It is a function of age, experience, intelligence and education. Self-concept of an individual is shaped by experience acquired over the years in social

Bruno U. Onyekuru, Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria.

Mary Zuru, Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port-Harcourt. Port-Harcourt, Nigeria.

and academic settings. Those who are high on the intelligence quotient and level of education have a better understanding of themselves and hence form true self-concepts about themselves.

Self-concept is important in the life of a person as it is a reflection of an individual's perception and understanding of himself as regards his capacity, physique and relationship with others. It offers a person a platform on which comparison is drawn among individuals within a social context. Positive self-concept acquired at formative age can help to develop necessary skills to face life challenges. In other words, acquiring defeatist beliefs through negative self-concept is detrimental to the development of competence needed for personal growth.

Self-concept does not always reflect reality (Yengimolki, Kalantarkousheh & Malekitabar, 2015). When there is dissonance between "actual self" and "real self" self-concept is defective. For self-concept to reflect reality, there must be congruence between "real self" and "actual self". Adolescents who have positive self-concept possess a higher social and emotional compatibility that influences the potentiality to make progress (Nasir & Lin, 2012). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) believe that low self-concept has a close correlation with vulnerability to behavioural problems and depression. Those who have negative perception about themselves often show a lower efficiency for interpersonal relationships. The result of the study conducted by Ybrandt (2008) showed that self-concept is a main factor in social relationship, peer relationship and compatibility with life events. It is necessary in social context as positive self-concept enhances adjustment making accommodation of people with diverse backgrounds and behaviours possible.

Adjustment itself is a process which explains the way and means of an individual's adaptation to himself and his environment without reference to the quality of such adjustment or its outcome in terms of success or failure (Paramanik, Saha & Mondal, 2014). It refers to the psychological process through which people manage or cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life (Opara & Onyekuru, 2013). School adjustment can be defined as the process by which students conform to the code of conduct, norms, beliefs and philosophy of the school. Students can experience difficulties in adjusting to system of instruction, schoolmates, disciplinary issues, code of conduct and pressure of daily activities occasioned by a loaded

curriculum, sports and social engagements. This can breed fear, anxiety and depression. Through school adjustment, students discard antisocial tendencies which can impede academic activities and interpersonal relationships. A study conducted by Wosu (2013) on self-concept as a correlate of social adjustment using a sample of 847 students found that social self-concept and academic self-concept had a significant joint relationship with school adjustment. Mensah (2014) also investigated the relationship between social self-concept and academic self-concept using a sample of 52 primary school pupils. The results of the study showed that social self-concept and academic self-concept had significant separate relationships with school adjustment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Life is all about challenges. As people are exposed to experiences, they grapple with the life challenges by adopting skills necessary to overcome the challenges. Over the years, successive failures and achievement in life create an opportunity for assessment of oneself so that people begin to associate themselves with successes and failures. Prolonged association of oneself with successes through appreciable personal achievement culminates in development of corresponding positive self-concept. However, when a person has experienced consistent failures over the years, development of negative self-concept is inevitable especially if counselling intervention is not provided.

Like self-concept, school adjustment is also influenced by experiences to which one is exposed over the years. Both of these constructs are environmental in nature as factors inherent in the society affect them. People who lack positive self-concept may struggle to make and keep friends, feel isolated and may be uncomfortable in the company of peers. They may also find it difficult to relate with classmates and others. This study, therefore, was geared towards investigating self-concept vis-à-vis its influence on the school adjustment among secondary school students in Nembe town of Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What is the joint influence of self-concept (social and academic) on school

- adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town?
2. What is the separate influence of self-concept (social and academic) on school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant joint influence of self-concept (social and academic) on school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town.
2. There is no significant separate influence of self-concept (social and academic) on school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town?

METHOD

The population of this correlational study is 1983 senior secondary (two) students of public secondary school from Nembe town of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. From the population, a sample of 610 senior secondary (two) students was drawn using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection is Self-concept and School Adjustment Scale (SSAS). It is a non-cognitive researcher – made instrument of Likert format. It consists of four sections. Section A was designed to elicit demographic information from the respondents. Sections B, C and D contained 15 items each. Section B measured social self-concept of the respondents. Section C measured academic self-concept while section D measured

school adjustment of the respondents. The response options of the items of the instrument were strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

The validity of the instrument was established through the assistance of two lecturers of Measurement and Evaluation background. The reliability coefficients of the instrument as measured through test-retest method using Pearson product moment correlation technique were 0.69, 0.78 and 0.74 for sections B, C and D respectively. Twenty senior secondary (two) students participated in this preliminary test. The validated instrument was finally administered to 610 senior secondary (two) students that constituted the sample of the study. The data generated from the instrument were analyzed using SPSS (version 21).

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented with the research questions preceding the corresponding hypotheses.

R_{Q1}: What is the joint influence of self-concept (social and academic) on school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town?

The research question was answered using Pearson coefficient of correlation from multiple regression analysis. The results are as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Results of joint influence of self-concept on school adjustment of respondents

Model	R	R. Square	Adjusted R. Square
	0.835	0.697	0.696

From table 1, it can be seen that the coefficient of correlation represented by r-value is 0.835. The square of the coefficient of correlation is 0.697 while the adjusted square of coefficient of correlation is 0.696. The value of the coefficient of correlation shows that social self-concept and academic self-concept had high positive joint influence on school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town. The adjusted r-square shows that social self-concept and academic self-concept jointly accounted for

69.6% variation in school adjustment of the respondents.

H₀₁: There is no significant joint influence of self-concept (social and academic) on school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town.

To test hypothesis 1, the data generated from the instrument were analyzed using ANOVA associated with multiple regression analysis. The results are as shown in table 2.

Table 2: ANOVA results of the joint influence of self-concept on school adjustment

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	26908.819	2	13454.409	698.344	0.00
Residual	11694.566	607	19.266		
Total	38603.385	609			

Table 2 shows that the mean square of regression is 13454.409 and the mean square of residual is 19.266. The calculated f-value is 698.344 which is significant at 0.00 and also significant at 0.05. Since the calculated f-value is significant at 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant joint influence of self-concept on school adjustment.

R₀₂: What is the separate influence of self-concept (social and academic) on school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town?

Research question 2 was answered using Pearson coefficient of correlation from multiple regression analysis and the results are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Results of separate influence of self-concept on school adjustment of respondents

Model	R	R. Square	Adjusted R. Square
Social self-concept	0.803	0.644	0.644
Academic self-concept	0.831	0.690	0.689

Table 3 shows that for social self-concept, the Pearson coefficient of correlation (r-value) is 0.803, the square of coefficient of correlation is 0.644 and the adjusted square of coefficient of correlation is 0.644. Similarly, for academic self-concept, the coefficient of correlation is 0.831, the square of coefficient of correlation is 0.690 and the adjusted square of coefficient of correlation is 0.689. The values of coefficients of correlation for social self-concept and academic self-concept show that social self-concept and academic self-concept each has a high positive separate influence on the school adjustment of the students. Based on the adjusted square of coefficient of correlation, social self-concept accounts for 64.4% of

variation in school adjustment of the students while the remaining 35.6% of variation in school adjustment is not accounted for by social self-concept. Again, 68.9% of variation in school adjustment of the students is accounted for by academic self-concept, while the remaining 31.1% of variation in school adjustment is not accounted for by academic self-concept.

H₀₂: There is no significant separate influence of self-concept (social and academic) on school adjustment of secondary school students in Nembe town?

Hypothesis 2 was tested with t-values from multiple regression analysis and the results are shown in table 4.

Table 4: Results of t-test associated with multiple regression analysis on the separate influence of self-concept on school adjustment of respondents

	Unstandardized Coefficients	B	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	Sig
Constant	7.192			8.462	0.00
Social self-concept	0.244		0.227	3.773	0.00
Academic self-concept	0.646		0.619	10.280	0.00

Table 4 shows the t-values for social self-concept and academic self-concept are 3.773 and 10.280 respectively. The t-values for social

self-concept and academic self-concept are significant at probability level of 0.00 and also significant at probability level of 0.05. This implies

that social self-concept has a significant influence on school adjustment of secondary school students and that academic self-concept has a significant influence on school adjustment of secondary school students. In this model, the predicting equation is given by $y = 7.192 + 0.244x_1 + 0.646x_2$ where y represents the data points for school adjustment. The x_1 and x_2 represent the data points for social self-concept and academic self-concept respectively.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

A good number of findings have been made in this study. First, it was found that social self-concept and academic self-concept had a significant joint influence on school adjustment. This finding is similar to the finding of Wosu (2013) which revealed that the two aspects of self-concept had a significant joint relationship with social adjustment. The finding of significant joint influence of social self-concept and academic self-concept on school adjustment is not surprising. This is because social self-concept, academic self-concept and school adjustment are environmental issues. Students in the classrooms enjoy some social interaction with one another, learn to jettison unwholesome attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in order to exhibit acceptable behaviours needed for favourable interpersonal relationships and sound academic performance.

It was also found that social self-concept and academic self-concept each had individual significant influence on school adjustment. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Mensah (2014) which showed that social self-concept and academic self-concept had separate relationships with school adjustment and these relationships were significant at a probability level of 0.05. The finding of significant individual influence of self-concept on school adjustment in this study can be explained from the fact that social self-concept and academic self-concept impact on the interpersonal relationships among students and their academic activities and hence, they influence school adjustment.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings in this study, it was concluded that social self-concept and

academic self-concept had joint and separate significant relationship with school adjustment.

THE CONCERN OF THE COUNSELLORS

Secondary school students in Nembe Town of Bayelsa State have been experiencing persistent low successes in their academic endeavours. The counsellors should be concerned that if the lingering low academic successes among the students are not halted immediately, they will impact negatively on the self-concept of the students and this can set up a vicious cycle of poor performance and negative self-concept. The last thing that any responsive government and stakeholders in education sector expect now is to have growing population of youths with negative self-concept; youths who do not believe in themselves; youths who think that they are not endowed with the appropriate knowledge and skills to contribute meaningfully to the development of the state, country and themselves. The counsellors should be concerned on how they can nib this ugly trend in bud.

Counsellors in the state service and those who are practicing independently should offer assistance to the youths by guiding the students to develop positive self-concept. This they can do by persuading the students especially those in our basic education level (primary and secondary schools) to believe in themselves; they should not be afraid of any subjects or tasks and that they can surmount any academic or life challenges by putting in adequate effort. The students should be made to understand that the greatest facilitator of success in academic and social life is effort rather innate endowment, implying that with effort, they can succeed.

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