

SELF-CONCEPT AS A PREDICTOR VARIABLE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KEBBI STATE

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ABSTRACT

The main thrust of this paper was to find out how self-concept predicts academic performance of primary school pupils in Kebbi State. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to test the hypotheses and the instruments used were Federal Ministry of Education Personality Inventory for Nigerian Junior Secondary School self-concept scale and a constructed Mathematics and English languages tests. The finding was that, there is significant relationship between self-concept and academic performance of primary school pupils. It was therefore, recommended that since there was significant relationship between self concept and academic performance, teachers and parents should endeavour to train their pupils to have positive self-concept, through praises and encouragements on every effort they make.

Introduction

Self-concept is an individual perception of self formed through experience. With environment, interaction with significant others and attribution of his/her own behaviour (Shevelson and Bolus, 1982).

According to Olowu (1990), self-concept is the system of perception, which the organism formulates of the self in awareness of its distinctive existence. In other words, it is a construct which is inferred from behaviour and which evolves from experience. However, Salawu and Bagudo (2000) viewed it as an individuals perception of self formed through experience with the environment interaction with significant others and attribution to his or her own behaviour. Self-concept plays an important role in the development of children's behaviour.

According to Thomas (1989) when a child hears his mother say day-in-day-out you are a bad boy. The child may believe after sometimes that he is a bad boy. Most

of the problems children encountered in life are the problems they have since childhood. It is like a child who hates Mathematics at primary school after sometimes will carry his hatred of Mathematics to Junior secondary School, Senior Secondary School or even to tertiary institution, this is because he perceived himself as being bad in Mathematics and hence ignore Mathematics completely.

The main thrust of this paper is to investigate the relationship between self-concept and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kebbi State. According to Erickson (1968) children come to know themselves through the things they do and the skills they performed.

Literature Review

Makanju (1994) termed self-concept as an individual view of himself in relation to his goals and to others, the kind of person he believes himself to be, the kind of aspirations he has. However various authors used different terms such as self-esteem (Copper Smith, 1959) self image (Kauser, 1971) and self identity (Erickson, 1971) all to mean self-concept. While in Olowu (1990) Ezuido defined self-concept as a multidimensional construct which refers to the way an individual perceives, feels, think about and evaluates himself. While Omoluabi also in Olowu (1990) define self-concept to be characteristics inherent in the personality of every individual.

According to Machargo (1991) self-concept is the set of perceptions or reference points that the individual has about himself. It is the set of characteristics attributes qualities and deficiencies, capacities and limits, values and relationships that individuals knows to be descriptive of himself and which he perceives as data concerning his identity. It is to Hamarchek (1981) a set of knowledge and attitudes that we have about ourselves, the perceptions that individual assigns to himself and characteristics or attributes that we use to describe ourselves.

According to Francisco (2000) self-concept influences how a person feels, how he or she thinks, learns, value himself or herself, relates to others and ultimately, how he or she behaves. Self-concept includes both descriptive as well as evaluative aspects of an individual with.

Meaning of Academic Performance

Children generally, experience the pain or failure and the joy of success long before they reach school age, but their performance or lack of it, do not become official until they enter formal school system. However, a public record of their

progress gradually accumulates and as pupils they must learn to adapt to the condition and pervasive spirit of evaluation that will dominate their school years (Salawu, 1991).

Academic performance is determined by the achievement of students in different school subjects over a period of time (Salawu, 1991). In Nigeria primary school pupils are judged through their academic performance in continuous assessment, tests and terminal examinations for entrance into junior secondary school.

So many researches have been conducted on self-concept and academic performance by people such as Barnes (1978) Campbell (1965) Caplin (1966) McMichael (1977) Purkey (1970) and Vargo (1974) to mention a few.

Relationship between Self-Concept and Academic Performance

Many researchers believed that there is significant relationship between self-concept and academic performance such as (Burnes, 1978) Brodover (1962) Campbell (1965) Caplin (1966) McMichael (1977) and Salawu (1991). All have dealt with relationship between self-concept and academic performance and they have shown a persistent and significant relationship between self-concept and academic performance. Barnes (1978) and Capbell (1965) for instance, concluded that, individual's achievements are functions to their perception of the self and that any individual is motivated by a need to achieve at a level which is consistent with his current self perceptions.

Roth (1959) asserted that the way an individual sees himself would go a long way to affect his academic performance. In Caplin's study of black students it was found that children who have positive concept of themselves tended to have high academic performance than those with negative self-concept.

Based on the view of studies that showed a positive relationship between self-concept and academic performance Watt, Enber and Clifford (1964) carried out an exploratory study meant to determined whether the association previously reported between self-concept and academic performance has its origin in self-concept being unusual to achievement by contrast, the experiences of academic success or failure playing a part in the formation of self-concept. They found that even as early as kindergarten, self-concept, phenomena are antecedent to and predict reading accomplishment at childhood.

However, this is some of the Western studies. On the Nigerian scene, study by Salawu (1991) which was conducted in Northern Nigeria and indeed in Sokoto and Kebbi states, where people's attitudes to Western Education differ from those of the west.

From the study of Salawu (1991) it was indicated that the correlation between adolescents' self-concept and their academic performance was low, negative and not significant, from the above one can say that the causes of students performance negatively or positively relates directly to what they believe about themselves.

According to Francisco (2004) self-concept determines the degree of academic performance and self-concept can also strongly be influenced by contingencies provided by the pupils significant others, among whom we must not underestimate teachers.

In studies of Ashman & Van Kanaye Nood (1998) where pupils with a high self-concept were compare with others with low self-concept, teachers report showed that they consider the high self-concept pupils as more popular, cooperative persistent in class work with lower anxiety levels, more supportive families and high expectations of future success. Academic experiences success or failure significantly affects the pupils' self-concept and self-image more than vice-versa. Moreover, Paralta (2004) postulates that self-concept and academic performance influence and determine each other mutually.

In his study of relationships between self-concept and academic achievement among primary school pupils, Peralta (2004) found that self-concept in Mathematics and in reading have very similar levels of association to the two measures of achievement i.e. Mathematics and reading. It means that, the pupils self-concept, be it in reading or Mathematics, is associated to a similar degree with academic performance that the pupils obtained in the areas of language arts, Mathematics and in other subjects generally. Another study similar to the above reports that academic self-concept proves itself favourably associated with academic performance (Castor, 1997).

Research Design

The research used for this research is correlational study, which is a type of research that is concerned with determining or measuring the degree of relationship between two or more variables, which is a type of research that is concerned with determining or measuring the degree of relationship between two or more variables. It is study that can be used to know if relationship exists between variables.

Population of the Study

The subjects of the study were primary six pupils in Kebbi State, both male and

female. The number of primary schools in Kebbi State are one thousand, three hundred and twenty two (1322), with pupils enrolment of three hundred and ninety thousand, three hundred and twenty eight (390,328) pupils. See table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of Pupils Enrolment as at 2003/2004 LGEA by LGEA

S/No.	LGEA	NO. OF SCHOOLS	NO. OF CLASS ROOMS	2003		
				M	F	T
1.	Aliero	25	116	6,395	2,493	8,888
2.	Arewa	84	146	24,556	13,887	38,443
3.	Argungu	59	268	31,952	20,177	52,129
4.	Augie	49	161	11,083	5,169	16,252
5.	Bagudo	99	291	22,844	16,538	39,382
6.	B/Kebbi	74	365	15,626	9,758	25,384
7.	Bunza	70	259	6,640	3,927	10,567
8.	Dandi	55	219	11,452	4,524	15,976
9.	D/Wasagu	97	186	10,795	3,974	14,769
10.	Fakai	74	179	11,524	5,672	17,196
11.	Gwandu	59	172	6,612	2,554	9,166
12.	Jega	61	220	11,577	5,667	17,244
13.	Kalgo	47	137	7,449	4,487	11,936
14.	K/Besse	56	165	7,357	2,988	10,345
15.	Maiyama	60	379	12,559	4,801	17,360
16.	Ngaski	56	139	12,615	5,657	18,270
17.	Sakaba	64	139	7,184	2,312	9,496
18.	Shanga	49	159	5,088	1,639	6,727
19.	Suru	67	276	8,049	4,376	12,425
20.	Yauri	47	159	8,168	5,238	13,406
21.	Zuru	70	280	14,019	10,946	24,965
TOTAL		1,322	4,414	253,544	136,784	390,328

Source: Kebbi State Primary Education Board, 2004

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample and sampling technique used is in selecting the samples were random sampling. This is a method of sampling in which every subject in a population of the study is given equal chance of being selected. This implies that no element of the population is omitted deliberately except by chance, which shows that the selection is unbiased.

Instrumentation

The instruments used are:

- a. Personality inventory for the Nigerian Junior Secondary School, Measuring Self-Concept was adapted to measure pupils' self-concept. Guidance and Counselling unit of the Federal Ministry of Education designed the instrument.
- b. Academic performance test in Mathematics and English language.

Administration of the Instruments

The instruments were administered to the pupils simultaneously in one day and at the same time. The subjects were given one and a half hours (1½ hr) to answer the questions.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient 'r' was used to test the relationship between self-concept and academic performance of primary school pupils.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The study is aimed at determining whether self-concept is related to academic performance of primary school pupils.

Table 2: The 'r' of Respondents on the Self-Concept Scale and Academic Performance

Sex	\bar{x} in Self-Concept	\bar{x} In Academic Performance	N	SD in Self Concept	SD in Academic Performance	r-cal	r-crit	df	Sign Level
Male	83.51	26.52	250	45.36	11.71	0.695	0.195	500	0.05
Female	80.39	24.31	250	45.60	8.60				

Looking at the table above which shows the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient 'r' between the independent variable self-concept and the dependent variable academic performance shows that the calculated 'r' of 0.695 is greater than the critical value of 'r' which stands at 0.195 with these figures the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between primary school pupils self-concept and their academic performance stands rejected. It is not surprising that children with positive concept of themselves performed better academically because they have confidence in themselves and can make their academic work

confidently than those with low concept of themselves. In this case self-concept is not only related to academic performance, it is also significant.

Discussions

The findings in table 2 shows that there is significant relationship between primary school pupils' self-concept and their academic performance. This disagreed with Salawu's finding where it was indicated that, the correlation between self-concept and academic performance was low and hence not significant. A possible reason for this may be the fact the Salawu used older students i.e. those in secondary schools while in this study primary school pupils were used. However, this finding agreed with that of Francisco (2004) where he indicated that self-concept determines the degree of academic achievement and it can also be strongly influenced on contingencies provided by the pupils' significant others among whom teachers would not be underestimated. In this study boys performed better in Mathematics and English language, which disagree with Salawu (1991) study in which girls performed better in English Language than boys.

Implications of the Study

This study revealed that primary school pupils who have good concept of themselves performed better academically than those with low self-concept of themselves. Hence self-concept is positively correlated with academic performance, this study has implication for teachers who work with pupils in the classrooms. They have very important role to play in helping the pupils to have positive self-concept, which has positive implication on their academic performance in various academic subjects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, since there was significant relationship between self-concept and academic performance, teachers and parents should endeavour to train their pupils to have positive self-concept through praise and encouragement. Teachers should involve their children to work in group and encourage them to lead the group in turn as this will encourage them to have confidence in themselves.

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