

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL SELF-CONCEPT ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract. The study was aimed at investigating the influence of social self-concept (demographic variables such as age, sex and school ownership) on academic achievement of secondary school students in Imo State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on cross-sectional descriptive survey design. The entire secondary school students in Imo State, Nigeria formed the population while 1600 Senior Secondary (SS) I, II and III students selected using multistage sampling technique formed the sample. Social Self-Concept of Secondary School Students (SSCSSS) was the instrument for data collection. Using descriptive and inferential statistics, findings showed that students' social self-concept (demographic variables) such as school ownership ($B = 8.069, t = 9.540, P = 0.000$); age ($B = 0.673, t = 3.551, P = 0.000$); and sex ($B = -0.879, t = -0.612, P = 0.541$) made significant contributions to the prediction of students' academic achievement. Hypothesis was tested at (0.05) level of significance. Based on the findings, it was concluded that among the three demographic variables, school ownership and age have more significant influence on academic achievement of the students and that school ownership influences academic achievement of the students more than age. It was recommended that more guidance and counselling services should be rendered to students in the secondary schools in Nigeria. This

is to enable them work on their social self-concept (social demographic variables such as age, sex and school type differentiation) which may turn out to improve their academic achievement.

Keywords: self-concept, demographic variables, academic achievement, senior secondary school students

Introduction

Self-concept has long been considered an essential component needed by every individual, especially secondary school students for self-actualization. Therefore, self-concept refers to the awareness of oneself. This is a feeling that one is different from the other (Ogbodo-Adoga, 2019). In secondary schools, to be precise, most students have different ways of thinking about their abilities in different aspects of life, such as academics, athletics and social interactions. Some of them see themselves as being up to the task in the three mentioned areas while others see themselves as being capable in some and not capable in other areas.

The magnitude of self-concept of students may vary across factors including age, sex, culture, discipline and even religion. It can be categorized as high, moderate or low depending on the individual factors that motivate it. A particular student may demonstrate a high concept in some areas, but demonstrate low self-concept in other areas. A student whose self-concept is high and centers around being a successful student, may eventually find himself marginalizing the importance of academic success, which could make him or her excel. On the other hand, a student who demonstrates low self-concept and centers around being a failure may eventually fail.

Social self-concept of students is very important for the enhancement of self-actualization, group membership, excellent academic performance and to-

tal well-being. Students who demonstrate poor relationship with peers, experience peer rejection and disregard group membership in secondary schools may experience failure in their academic works and may miss exams if care is not taken. Also, low social self-concept could result into low self-actualization, poor academic performance among others. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to investigate whether social self-concept influences academic achievement of secondary school students' in Imo State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the objective of the study was to examine the influence of socio-demographic variables such as sex, age and school ownership on secondary school students' academic achievement. In order to achieve the objective of the study, the following research question was raised: do sex, age and school ownership influence students' academic achievement?

The following research hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance: H₀: There is no significant influence of students' socio-demographic variables such as age, sex and school ownership on students' academic achievement.

Review of literature

Durosaro & Adebanye (2012) investigated the influence of gender on the career choice readiness of senior secondary students in Kwara State, Nigeria. It was identified that gender differences in self-concept and academic performance in a given domain can be affected by the achievement within another academic domain (Cockley, 2003). For instance, a study following a national sample of male and female students for a three-year-period found that male students who received a high grade in one academic domain (Mathematics) demonstrated lower self-concept within another domain (English) at a later point in time, and vice-versa (Asanbe et al., 2008). From the study of Zhang (2016), females have been found to get happiness and life satisfaction from interpersonal relationships from family and friends.

In comparison, males get happy and satisfied with their lives from their achievement. This is specifically among students as it is regarded to as academic self-concept (Zhang, 2016). Research has also found that females had higher scores than males in the family self-concept (Lin et al., 2002). However, another research carried out in 2010 (Zhang, 2016) had contrasting findings; as there were no gender differences in the family self-concept; in addition to the personal self-concept (Lin et al., 2002). Also, it showed that, there was no statistically significant gender differences in social self-concept. This was similar with a study done in 2002, where researchers found no statistically significant gender differences in the dimension of social self-concept (Lin et al., 2002).

Regarding the relationship between age and the social self-concept, Marčič & Grum (2011) are of the opinion that self-concept comes to its real and more stable form at the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. In terms of gender roles, the self-concept of women and men differs according to the way they define themselves (Biolcati, 2017). While women define themselves in relation to others; men define themselves by focusing on how they are independent from others. In the study carried out by Huang & Mason (2010), he showed the significant gender and age differences in self-esteem. Across all nations, men had higher levels of self-esteem than women did and both genders showed age-graded increases from late adolescence to middle adulthood. Both the shape and the average effect sizes for gender and age effects resembled previous findings and ranged between small to medium-sized effects. In terms of gender roles, the self-concept of women and men differs according to the way they define themselves (Cheng et al., 2017). Self-esteem can pave way for self-actualization.

Studies on self-actualization started with Abraham Maslow (1943; 1970). Maslow (1943) proposed his hierarchy of needs theory which enlisted basic human needs in the form of a hierarchy. The hierarchy of need theory is arguably the most prominent motivational theory in the field of psychology. The

five needs that were originally enlisted were physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow further expanded self-actualization into four needs, namely, cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and self-transcendence. He called these latter needs “being needs” or B-needs and the former four needs “deficient needs” or D-needs. He claimed that mentally healthy individuals follow a path called growth motivation that allowed them to move up this hierarchy from D-needs to B-needs. As individuals follow this path, they feel more fulfilled, their attention shifts from self-interest to selflessness, and they dedicate more time to causes outside of themselves and family. Maslow (1943) regarded the drive towards self-actualization beneficial to a society since it would lead to more solidarity, compassion, care, problem-solving, and altruism.

Method

The study adopted the cross-sectional descriptive survey design. This research design was employed because the aim of the study was to investigate whether social self-concept (social demographic factors such as age, sex and school ownership) of secondary school students in Imo State, Nigeria influence their academic achievement without manipulating the variables. The study population consisted of all the senior secondary students in Imo State, Nigeria totaling 27,873. The multi-stage sampling procedure was used in the study to select 1600 Senior Secondary (SS) I, II and III students in 20 secondary schools. In stage one, Imo State was conveniently selected out of the 36 States in Nigeria. In stage two, purposive sampling technique was used to select all the three Senatorial Districts, Imo East (Owerri Zone), Imo North (Okigwe Zone) and Imo West (Orlu Zone) in Imo State, Nigeria. In stage three, simple random sampling technique was employed to select three Local Government Areas (LGAs) (Ikeduru, Mbaitoli, Owerri Urban, Ehime Mbano, Obowo, Okigwe, Oguta, Ohaji and Orlu) from each of the three Senatorial Districts (making a total of nine LGAs). In stage four, two secondary schools (one state- and one privately-

owned) were selected from each of the nine LGAs using simple random sampling technique. Similarly, in this stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select all the two federal government colleges (Federal Government Girls College, Owerri and Federal Government College, Okigwe) in the state. This brings the total number of federal, state- and privately-owned secondary schools used in the study to 20. Lastly, simple random sampling technique was used to select 80 Senior Secondary (SS) I, II and III students from each of the 20 secondary schools (making a total of 1600 students).

A questionnaire titled “Social Self-Concept of Secondary School Students” (SSCSSS) was used for data collection. The SSCSSS was a 20-item questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The SSCSSS had two sections, A and B. Section A solicited information on the socio-demographic variables such as sex, age and religion of the students; and school ownership (federal, state- and privately-owned) while section B sought information regarding their academic achievement. The face and content validity of the instrument were established through experts’ judgments. These were experts in the fields of Psychology, and Tests and Measurement at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The suggestions of these experts guided the production of the final copy of the instrument. It was trial-tested on 100 respondents outside the study population. The reliability of SSCSSS was also estimated using Cronbach alpha method and yielded 0.73 reliability coefficient. The instrument was administered on the respondents with the help of two research assistants within an interval of three weeks. Copies of the questionnaire were assembled, scored and analysed. The SPSS software which employed descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages were used to analyse the research question while Pearson product moment correlation and stepwise multiple regression were used to test the hypothesis.

Results

Research question 1: Do socio-demographic variables such as sex, age and school ownership influence students' academic achievement?

Result in Table 1 shows that a total of 519(32.4%) were male respondents while 1081(67.6%) were female respondents. Also, 1106(69.1%) were between the age of 17 and 24 while only 494(30.9%) were between the age of 25 and above. However, a total of 1584(99%) were Christians, 0.2%(3) were Muslims, 11(0.7%) were traditionalist while only 2(0.1%) respondents belonged to other religions. Notably, only 102(6.4%) students attended federal government colleges, 532 representing 33.2% went to state-owned secondary schools while 966(60.4%) attended privately-owned secondary schools.

Table 1. Frequency and percentages of influence of age, sex and school ownership on secondary school academic achievement

Characteristics	Frequency (f)		Percentage (%)
Sex			
Male	519		32.4
Female	1081		67.6
Age			
17-24	1106		69.1
25-above	494		30.9
Religion			
Christianity	1584		99.0
Islam	3		0.2
Traditionalist	11		0.7
Others	2		0.1
School ownership			
Federal	102		6.4
State	532		33.2
Private	966		60.4
Total	1600		100

Source: Author's Analytical Result

Ho: There is no significant influence of socio-demographic variables such as age, sex and school ownership on students' academic achievement.

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficient of socio-demographic variables such as sex, age and school ownership with the students' academic achievement and their levels of significance. The result of the analysis indicated that school ownership possesses the highest correlation coefficient (0.288). Therefore, school ownership goes into the model first followed by age and sex. Consequently, a forward stepwise multiple regression was conducted to determine the influence of sex, age and school ownership on academic achievement with school ownership going into block 1, age in the block two and sex in the block 3. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient of socio-demographic variables such as sex, age and school ownership with academic achievement of the students

	Social Concept	Sex	Age	School Ownership
Pearson correlation	1	-0.44	.171**	.288**
Academic achievement sig. (2-tailed)		.112	.000	.000
N	1600	1600	1600	1600

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3. Model summary of the stepwise multiple regression of socio-demographic variables (sex, age and school ownership) on students' academic achievement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.288 ^a	.083	.082	24.32432	.083	119.885	1	1322	.000
2	.304 ^b	.092	.091	24.21334	.009	13.146	1	1321	.000
3	.304 ^c	.092	.090	24.21908	.000	.374	1	1320	.541

a. Predictors: (Constant), school ownership

b. Predictors: (Constant), school ownership, Age

c. Predictors: (Constant), school ownership, Age, Sex

Table 3 shows results of the stepwise multiple regressions of socio-demographic variables such as sex, age and school ownership on academic achievement of the students. From the result, the R-square and adjusted R square values for school ownership were 0.83 and 0.82 respectively. It then implies that school ownership can explain a maximum of 8.3% and at least 8.2% of the variance observed in academic achievement of the students. This is significant at 0.05 level as the significant level of F-change for school ownership is 0.000. For age, the R-square change was attributable to 0.009. This implies that age can explain at most 0.9% of the observed variance on academic achievement of the students. This also is significant at 0.05 level as the significance of F-change for age is 0.000. However, for sex, the R-square change attributable to sex was 0.000. This implies that sex cannot explain any percentage of the observed variance in academic achievement of the students and is also not significant at 0.05 level of significance as the significance of F-change for sex is 0.541. It was therefore concluded that only school ownership and age have significant influence on academic achievement of the students and that school ownership influences academic achievement of the students more than age. In addition to this, the coefficient table was also presented in Table 4.

From Table 4, the strength of influence of school ownership alone was the highest as B-value was 8.934; while a combination of school ownership and age produced a B-value of 8.088. This showed that addition of age decreased the strength of the influence school ownership has over academic achievement of the students. In fact, when sex was introduced into the model, the B-value fell to all time low value of 8.069.

Table 4. Table of coefficients showing the relationship between socio-demographic variables (age, sex and school ownership) and academic achievement of students

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	140.248	1.753		80.020	.000
	School ownership	8.934	.816	.288	10.949	.000
2	(Constant)	127.070	4.032		31.519	.000
	School ownership	8.088	.845	.261	9.572	.000
	Age	.684	.189	.099	3.626	.000
3	(Constant)	128.822	4.947		26.042	.000
	School ownership	8.069	.846	.260	9.540	.000
	Age	.673	.189	.097	3.551	.000
	Sex	-.879	1.437	-.016	-.612	.541

a. Dependent Variable: Academic achievement

Discussion

Results in this study showed that students in the private schools had very high level of social self-concept compared to their counterparts in the public schools who showed less level of social self-concept. This implies that majority of the students in private schools had an improved self-concept that may likely improve their self-esteem and their academic achievement (Coetzee, 2011). In the same vein, Pinxten et al. (2010) showed that self-concept and study behaviour were positively related to the academic achievement of the students. This is because students who have good self-esteem have a clearly differentiated self-concept (Hui & Tsang, 2011). This finding of the study is related to Ajunwo

(2018) which found that to a high extent, students' self-acceptance, social confidence and self-anxiety as an aspect of self-concept relate to their academic achievement scores in Business Education in Rivers State, Nigeria. This shows that an improved self-concept will definitely have a positive impact in the academic and non-academic life of the students.

Furthermore, age and school ownership of secondary school students had significant influence on their academic achievement. The finding is similar to the findings of Marčič & Grum (2011) which showed that women are more likely than men to have a high self-concept in relationships with peers, parents, and in their social environment. However, Asanbe et al. (2008) in a study following a national sample of male and female students for a three-year-period found that male students who received a high grade in one academic domain (Mathematics) demonstrated lower self-concept within another domain (English) at a later point in time, and vice-versa.

Conclusion

The study concluded that socio-demographic variables of students in Imo State, Nigeria such as age, sex and school ownership were predictors of their academic achievement. Basically, only school ownership and age could influence students' academic achievement but school ownership influenced it more than age.

Limitations of the study

The following limitations were associated with this study: (1) the study was limited to the socio-demographic variables of social self-concept influencing secondary school students' academic performance in Imo State, Nigeria. The research failed to study the psycho-social factors responsible for students' academic achievement; (2) the study was carried out in only one state out of the

36 states in Imo State. Only 20 secondary schools in Imo state were used for the study. These had implications on generalizing the result of the study.

Suggestions for further research

Based on the scope and limitations of the study, the following suggestions for further studies were made: There is need to further investigate the socio-demographic variables (age, sex and school ownership) that influence positively the level of students' academic achievement in Imo State, Nigeria. Further studies can be carried out using other states in the federation. Also, psycho-social factors responsible for students' academic achievement should be investigated.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made: Secondary schools in Nigeria should consider the age level of their students during admission process to cater for maturity and ability to adapt and integrate into the school. More guidance and counselling services should be rendered to students in the secondary schools in Nigeria. This is to enable them work on their social self-concept (socio-demographic variables such as age, sex and school type differentiation) which may in return improve their academic achievement.

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