

INFLUENCE OF SELF-CONCEPT ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. The moderating variables used are sex, class level and family type. Descriptive survey research method was employed in the study while the simple and stratified sampling techniques were adopted to draw a total of 600 students. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Self-concept on Interpersonal Relationship Questionnaire" (ISIRQ), which was developed by the researchers and possessed a reliability coefficient of 0.76. A research question and three null hypotheses were generated and the data collected were analysed using the measure of central tendency and t-test statistical method. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The results thus revealed that self- concept negatively influenced interpersonal relationship of secondary school students. There is no significant difference in the influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis based on class level but significant difference existed based on sex and family type. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended among others that school counsellors should synergise with other stakeholders in education to help students enhance their self-concepts in order to improve on their interpersonal relationship

Key words: Self-Concept, Influence, Interpersonal Relationship, Students

Introduction

Concept of self reflects in human actions and interactions and there are relative ways by which people view themselves particularly in relation to the environment. Self concept therefore is the individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what is perceived about the totality of self. Self Concept is an important term for both counselling psychology and behaviourism it helps to determine self efficacy under a particular social phenomenon. Self concept is derived from social interactions that provide insight into one's feeling on how others react to him/her. According to Trotman (2015), behavioral scientists often assert that the self-concept is the sole perspective from which one can understand an individual's behavior because it includes all the dimensions of the self, including how one looks (self-image) and what one knows (self-knowledge), and the ways in which these exist for others (fulfilling the ego).

Sternke (2010) found at least 15 different 'self' terms used by various authors. Such terms include "self-concept," "self-esteem," "self-worth," and "self-acceptance," which are often used interchangeably and inconsistently, particularly when referring to different ideas about how people view themselves. However, Tuttel and Tuttel (2004) looked closely into the two frequently used terms "self-concept" and "self-esteem" and inferred that the latter is a general term used to describe how someone places value on him/herself. Thus, self-esteem refers to how favourable an individual regards himself/herself in relation to his/her experiences in the society. Self-concept, a term used frequently in the field of sociology, psychology and humanity, is defined 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 (Yahaya & Ramli, 2009). Adeyemo and Torubeli (2008) explained that self-concept is the set of knowledge and attitude that an individual has about him/herself; the perception that the individual assigns to himself and characteristics of attributes that he/she uses to describe self. The importance of self-concept of

secondary school students stems from its notable contribution to personality formation, which invariably translates to tendency to successfully engage in worthwhile educational activities. This has to do with social competence since it influences how a person feels, thinks, learns and values him/herself; how he/she relates with others and ultimately, how he/she behaves.

Viewing it as a product of social experience, Tuttel and Tuttel (2004) inferred that the development of self-concept does not only depends upon the family in which the student was brought up but also the educational and interpersonal experiences within the school environment. Perhaps, the most important distinction that differentiates various conceptualisations is whether self-concept is viewed as an overarching global characteristic of the person or as a set of self-evaluations specific to different domains of behaviour. Sternke (2010) stated that self-concept is a set of ideas about oneself that is descriptive rather than judgmental but self-esteem, on the other hand, refers to the evaluation of one's own qualities.

Self-concept is often classified into two major categories: positive self-concept and negative self-concept (Trotman, 2015). Positive self-concept is a type of self which is considered healthy and best for students' both academic performance and social relationships. Students in this category are likely to always hold positive view of themselves in any circumstance in life, in the course of their studies. Positive self-concept tends to lead to the feeling of confidence in one's ability, self-acceptance, not worrying about what others think or say and being optimistic on personal endeavour. Negative self-concept on the other hand is a type of self perception that is considered unhealthy and destructive to an individual person to hold about him/herself. Individuals with negative self-concept tend to hold negative view of themselves in any circumstance in life and are characterised by different inferiority complex. Those who fall in this category are easily discouraged, pessimistic, over-dependent, deceitful and hold negative self-talk characterized by various inferiority complex concerning their intra and interpersonal communication or relationship (Boulter, 2002).).

There are different views about when the development of self-

concept begins and how it develops. Tiedeman (2000) indicated that by age 3, children are aware of themselves and understand their impacts approximately. Leflot, Onghena and Colpin (2010) suggested that self-concept develops later, around age 7 or 8, as children are developmentally prepared to begin interpreting with their own feelings, abilities and interpretations of feedback they receive from parents, teachers and peers about themselves. Regardless of differing opinions about the onset of self-concept, Trautwein, Ludtke, Nagy and Marsh (2009) agreed on its importance and concluded that self concept influenced people's behaviours, cognitive and emotional outcomes including (but not limited to) academic achievement, levels of happiness, anxiety, self-esteem, life-satisfaction and most importantly interpersonal relationship. The level of self-concept in individual students does not only have influence on interaction among his/her peers, but also inhibits academic performance and achievement of the individual students.

Self-concept is essential to interpersonal relationship as a relationship is normally viewed as a connection between two individuals, while Interpersonal relationships usually involve some level of interdependence. It is a common belief that life is nothing but relationships and interdependent. An interpersonal relationship of student is an association between two or more people (the teachers and other learners in the school) with features ranging from fleeting to enduring. Interpersonal relationship may be based on several factors like love, business, academic or some other type of social commitment. Interpersonal relationships are formed in the context of social, cultural and other influences and the context can vary from schoolmates, family or kinship relations, friendship, marriage, relations with associates, work, clubs, neighbourhood, places of worship among others. Relationship could positively impact students' motivation, engagement, and achievement by way of its positive influences on other self-processes relevant to academic outcomes (Gerrig, Zimbardo & Philip, 2002).). For example, in the context of a student's life, Martin and Dowson (2009) found that positive interpersonal attachments to teachers and peers foster healthy social, emotional and intellectual functioning, as well as positive feelings of self-esteem and self-worth.

A relationship, as it is used in this study, refers only to the interactions among students, peers and teachers. High level of interpersonal relationships is essential within the school environment for healthy developments of teachers and students alike (Wubbels, Brekelmans, Van Tartwijk & Den Brok, 2006). Interpersonal relationships are dynamic systems that change continuously and rapidly depending on the medium of communication, source and the nature of the relationship. A relationship of trust is a lifelong process just like living organisms, which has a beginning, a life span and an end. Thus, an individual self-concept and attributed meaning given to a relationship usually determine the nature and the type of relationships an individual in any society will possess.

A relationship that is based on academic purpose, which is very crucial to students, takes a different form and highly influenced by different factors such as the school environment, school authority, instructional method and commitment level. Leflot, Onghena and Colpin (2010) found that students in upper grade established more positive interpersonal relationships in school than those in the middle grade. Burt (2005) established that the demographic variables of students, particularly the family background, significantly influenced students' level of relationship with their teachers but their sex did not exact influence on their relationships and academic performance

The level of self-concept usually determines the nature of social skills an individual in any society will exhibit. An individual whose self-concept is positive would likely be able to relate with people in his environment with little or no amount of inferiority complex. Many students could be exhibiting different behaviours that are unacceptable as a result of poor self concept which may stem from inalienable factors such as earlier experience, parent-child relationship and other environmental conditions. Eguavoen and Eniola (2016) found that there was significant relationship between self-concept and aggressive behaviour of students with visual impairment in Oyo State. Furthermore, family background, gender, class and religion did not play any significant role on self concept and interpersonnal relationship of the respondents. A study conducted across four countries (Australia, Canada, Korea & Norway) by Kropp, Lavack, and Silvera (2005)

revealed that self concept predicted negative behaviours of university students. A related study (Pajares & Miller, 1994) found that mathematics self-efficacy was more predictive of problem solving than mathematics self-concept. Self-efficacy also mediated the effect of gender and prior experience on self-concept, perceived usefulness, and problem solving. Since the outcome of self-evaluation is a fundamental factor that determines the success of individuals social intercourse, it is therefore pertinent to examine how much self-concept influences interpersonal relationship of students, which could invariably impact their school activities. Thus, this study investigated influence of self concept on interpersonal relationships of secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State.

Research Question

1. How would self-concept influence interpersonal relationship of secondary school students?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students based on class level.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students based on family type.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study with a population comprising all secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. The sample size of the study is 600 students selected from six secondary schools in Ilorin using simple random and stratified sampling techniques. An instrument titled “Influence of Self-Concept on Interpersonal Relationship Questionnaire” (ISOIRQ), which was developed by the researchers, was used to collect the required

information. The instrument adopted the Four Point Likert Scale type on a continuum ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with assigned value of 4-3-2-1. The average mean score is 2.50 ($4+3+2+1=10/4=2.50$). Thus, any item that has a mean score with of 2.50 and less have positive influence, while a mean above 2.50 indicate negative influence. The highest possible score from the instrument is 80 (4X20 items) and least score is 20 (1X20 items). Thus, range will be 60 (80-20). If the range is divided into two levels (positive and negative influence) it will be 30. Therefore, a score from 30 and below indicates positive influence while a score above 30 means negative influence. This is because the items on the questionnaire were negatively worded. The instrument was validated by test experts in the University of Ilorin. The test re-test method of reliability was adopted and a coefficient value of 0.76 was obtained, which showed a satisfactory level of reliability. Data collected were analysed using the measure of central tendency and the t-test statistics.

Results

Research Question 1: *How would self-concept influence interpersonal relationship of secondary school students?*

Table 2: Mean and Rank Order of the Responses on the Influence of Self-Concept on Interpersonal Relationship

As a student my self-concept makes me	Mean	Ranks
isolate myself from study group in the school	3.63	1 st
display aggression to the teachers	3.50	2 nd
become tensed in group discussion.	3.38	3 rd
unable to contribute during group discussion	3.23	4 th
feel shy while talking to my teacher	3.21	5 th
lose confidence while talking to other students	3.20	6 th
become nervous while talking to the teachers	3.14	7 th
easily grow annoyed with other students	3.10	8 th
feel timid to talk in the class	3.10	8 th
feel insecure while interacting with other students	3.10	8 th
feel inferior in the class	3.10	8 th
exhibit envious behavior to my classmates	3.09	12 th
always depend on other students	3.03	13 th
always disagree with my mates	3.02	14 th
dislike getting along with other students	3.00	15 th
often express displeasure to other classmates	2.95	16 th
feel imbalance in group activities.	2.91	17 th
feel depressed when sitting among classmates	2.91	17 th
display verbal aggression to other students	2.86	19 th
afraid of close contact with classmates of the opposite sex	2.80	20 th

Cumulative Mean Score: 62.26

The result in Table 2 revealed a cumulative mean score of 62.26, which is well above the mean value of 30.0 adopted as the cut-off point for taking decision on the information in the Table (Cumulative mean score above 30.0 indicates negative influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship). Also, all the items in the instrument (questionnaire) have mean scores above 2.50. It therefore, implies that self-concept negatively influenced interpersonal relationship of the respondents since the cumulative mean of 62.26 is well above the cut-off of 30.0.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant difference in the influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students on the basis of sex.*

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and p-value of respondents in the influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship based on gender.

Sex	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-val	p-val
Male	280	68.81	6.62	598	2.31	*0.001
Female	320	66.03	8.71			

*significant, $p < 0.05$

The result in Table 3 showed a calculated p-value of 0.001, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Male secondary school students have a higher mean of 68.81, thus self-concept significantly influenced male secondary school students' interpersonal relationship negatively than their female counterparts.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference in the influence of self concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students on the basis of class level.*

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and p-value on influence of self concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students based on class level

Class Level	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-val	p-val
Junior	300	63.17	6.37	598	0.81	0.63
Senior	300	62.82	7.86			

The result in Table 4 revealed that the p-value of 0.63 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant difference in the influence of self concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students based on family type.*

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation, p-value on influence of self concept on interpersonal relationship of secondary school students based on family type

Family Type	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-val	p-val
Monogamy	217	60.13	5.71	598	3.03	*0.002
Polygamy	383	67.94	7.86			

*significant, $p < 0.05$

The result in Table 5 revealed that the p-value of 0.002 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Students from polygamous families are more negatively influenced by their self-concept than those from monogamous family since the mean of the former (67.94) is higher than that of the latter (60.13).

Discussion of Findings

It was revealed from the study that self-concept negatively influenced interpersonal relationship of secondary school students. This finding corroborates the earlier study of Eguavoen and Eniola (2016), which found that there was significant relationship between self-concept and aggressive behaviour of students with visual impairment in Oyo State. Kropp, Lavack, and Silvera (2005) has earlier found that self concept of university students across Australia, Canada, Korea and Norway influenced their problematic behaviours. Thus, self-concept is a factor that cannot be ignored when considering interpersonal and social activities among secondary school students.

Finding also revealed that there is a significant difference between male and female secondary school students in the influence of self-concept on their interpersonal relationship. This implied that male and female students are not similar in the influence of self-concept on their interpersonal relationship. On the premise of the result in Table 3, the mean (68.81) of male is higher than that of the female (66.03). This indicates that male students are more negatively influenced by their self-concept than the female. This is not in agreement with Burt (2005) who found that self-concept influenced students in similar degrees

regardless of their gender.

Also, no significant difference between junior secondary school and senior secondary school students in the influence of self-concept on their interpersonal relationship found. This finding disagrees with the finding of Leflot, Onghena and Colpin (2010) that students in upper grade differed significantly from those in middle grade in relation to the influence of self-concept on their interpersonal relationship. The reason for the dissimilarity between the previous and present studies could be attributed to the difference in the locale which might influenced the personality development of the respondents based on the culture and system of education in their societies.

Furthermore, a significant difference in the influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship between students from monogamous and polygamous family background was revealed. The result equally showed a higher mean score (67.94) in favour of students from polygamous family background. Students from polygamous could be more influenced by their self-concept than those from monogamous family background because the former are likely to be having challenges in relation to self assessment in the light of possible discrimination among step siblings which could, in most cases, aggregate to negative self-concept and poor interpersonal relationship. The findings obtained disagrees with the study of Burt (2005) which established that demographic variables of students, particularly the family background significantly influenced students' level of relationship with their teachers, regardless of the family type.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have contributed to the existing body of literature that self-concept is an imminent variable that determines students interpersonal relationship which equally reflects in the degree of their participation in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. This has been established in this study with cumulative mean response of the participants to the influence of self-concept on their interpersonal relationship at a degree higher than the cut-off point for taking decision in the study. Nevertheless, it is expedient to note that self concept negatively influenced interpersonal relationship of the respondents in

this study. It has equally been established that male and female as well as students from monogamous and polygamous family background are not similar in the influence of self-concept on their interpersonal relationship but both junior and senior students are similar.

The findings of this study have some important implications that would be useful for teaching, learning and counselling activities. The teachers would understand the need to pay attention to affective domain of the students particularly in relation to their interaction with others, which is a product of their self-concept. The counselling psychologists would realize the need to work on students' self-concept in order to improve their adequate participation in school activities through interaction (interpersonal relationship) in the school.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Workshop and seminars should be organized for students on how to prevent been negatively influenced by self-concept in their interpersonal relationship. This will help to enlighten students and prepare for smooth interpersonal relationship, particularly in school
- School guidance counsellors and other stakeholders in education industry should synergize to provide training for students on Self-concept Enhancement Skills. It will assist the students to develop positive self-concept which could help in enhancing their academic and social performance.
- Attention should be paid to variables of sex and family background of students whenever the teachers, counsellors and other stakeholders are considering influence of self-concept on interpersonal relationship.

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