

Teacher Self-Concept and Academic Achievement of JSS 3 Students in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study focused on teacher self-concepts and academic achievement of JSS 3 students in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, one research question was posed and transformed into one hypothesis which was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted Ex-post facto research design. Three hundred and twelve (312) Social Studies teachers in three hundred and fifty two (352) public secondary schools were purposively (census) chosen as the sample. A four point likert scale of Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) and Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT) were used as instruments for data collections. Independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The result obtained revealed that teacher self-concept significantly influences students' academic achievement in Social Studies. It was recommended among others that teachers should be encouraged to be of stable disposition as this will enhance their productivity and boost self-concept for effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum contents.

Keywords: Teacher, self-concept, students, academic achievement.

Introduction

The issue of declining academic achievement of students in Social Studies in Nigeria and in Cross River State Secondary Schools in particular has generated much argument among education stakeholders. The quality of Social Studies education and achievement of Social Studies students depend not only on the teachers as reflected overtime in the discharge of their duties but also on the students' achievement in both internal and external examination.

Social Studies education remains the most veritable and effective instrument of change, values transmission and national development. Edinyang (2015) opined that Social Studies education and social change are inexorably interwoven and therefore

create changes not only on the recipient but also changes in the society. According to Mezieobi (2018), Social Studies education is aimed at self-realization and actualization, equipping in the learner sound knowledge that can be useful to his immediate family and the society at large. Fan (2012) posited that Social Studies education enables the learners to explore the world, it encourages students to open their minds to many places in which humans live, and also enlightens students on many cultural differences of the world's population. This basic sense of citizenship is nursed and nurtured in the upper basic education level of the Universal Basic Education (that is JSS1 – JSS3) as students study branches of government and how citizens interact in the society.

Despite the importance of Social Studies education as outlined above, Rafae (2014) opined that students' academic achievement in Social Studies is declining. This prevailing situation undermines and erodes the importance of Social Studies education with regards to the sustenance of the nation's unity and progress – the very reason for which Social Studies was introduced into the Nigerian School curriculum as part of the instrument for achieving national development and unity (Federal Republic of Nigeria, NPE, 2014). Year after year in the study area, students' achievement records continue to change. While the achievement scores of some students improve, others keep on declining. It is not also strange to find that a student who responded very well to questions during lessons failed to correctly respond to the same item when the word "test" or "examination" is attached.

Self-concept can be defined as an individual evaluation of self that is based on experience and interpretation of those experiences. Bacon (2016) defined self-concept as a mental and conceptual understanding and persistence regarding sentiment being hold for one's own existence. In other words, self-concept is the sum total of person's knowledge and understanding of him/herself which includes feelings and perceptions about academic skills or performance. Academic self-concept is a cognitive and affective evaluation of the self that influence actual academic achievement. Academic self-concept has generally been shown to be related to grade point average among secondary school students. Jones (2017) opined that academic self-concept is student's academic ability when compared with other students in a particular subject which involves description and evaluation of one's perceived academic abilities.

Self-concept is multifaceted in that people categorize the vast amount of information they have about themselves and relate the categorized information to another and is hierarchically arranged with perceptions of behavior. As individual gets older, moving from childhood to adolescence, the said individual becomes better able to

determine the strength and weaknesses in specific areas. Attitude of learners is an acquired or predisposed mental state regarding an object with some degree of positivity or negativity which is perceived from a social or personal stimulus. To Muller (2012), self-concept is one of the major psychological variables that influence academic performance or advancements. The student who enters the classroom with a good attitude and eager to learn, have positive energy, learns easily and eventually earns good grades in examination; but students who go into the classroom with bad attitude or refuse to attend classes will likely have poor academic achievement. This study therefore sought to find out the extent to which self-concept influence academic achievement of students in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Kumara (2017) conducted a study to investigate the influence of self-concept on academic achievement of students in economics in higher secondary school in Ghana. The researcher sampled 420 students out of the total population of 600. Using a survey research design and simple random sampling technique, the researcher used a one-way analysis of variance to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the findings revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of students at the higher secondary level.

In another development, Tayo (2015) conducted a study on self-concept and academic performance in Lagos state. The purpose of the study was to find out if self-concept predicts academic performance in general subjects (Mathematics, English Language, Integrated Science and Social Studies) in Lagos state, Nigeria. A total of 392 students (141 boys and 141 girls) randomly selected from junior high school students in Lagos completed the 40-item close ended questionnaire. The average scores of the mid-term test-scores of students in Mathematics, English Language, Integrated Science and Social Studies were used to measure pupils' academic performance. The reliability coefficient of 0.86 was recorded. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data and were tested at 0.05 level of significance with 2 as degree of freedom. It was found out from the study that self-concept does not directly predict students' academic performance as it only does so, when students are able to exert some level of effort in learning what they have been taught.

Also, Essien (2014) conducted a research to ascertain if self-concept predicts academic achievement among students in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria. The main purpose was to find out if anxiety, self-concept and attitude jointly predict academic achievement. The sample for the study was made up of 400 students randomly sampled from the three (3) education zones in Cross River State.

Data were collected using a four-point scale questionnaire to test the formulated hypothesis and were analyzed using multiple regression analysis tested at 0.05 level of significance with 4 and 398 degrees of freedom. The result of findings revealed that anxiety, self-concept and attitude significantly predict academic achievement. The results further showed that self-concept dominantly predicts academic achievement more than anxiety and attitude.

In another development, Bacurabe (2016) undertook a study to investigate the relationship between academic self-concept and academic performance of students in Mathematics in Kumasi, Ghana. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the difference between academic self-concept of male and female students academic performance. The total population of 1470 students comprising 756 male and 714 female junior secondary schools students were randomly sampled from 34 public schools through stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using two instruments, namely, achievement test in mathematics and academic self-concept scale. The self-concept instrument was subjected to reliability test using Cronbach alpha. A reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained which indicated that the instrument is reliable enough to be used for the actual research. Independent t-test and Pearson product moment correlation analysis were used in analyzing the data. The result of the findings showed that a positive relationship exists between the academic self-concept of male and female academic performance.

However, Umo-Inyang (2015) identified two dimensions of self-concept, namely:

a) The model self-concepts which emphasizes on the interaction between an individual and the environment. The model self-concept states that a child develops a sense of self-regards through the process of initiating various interactions in the immediate environment.

b) Mirror self-concepts: The mirror self-concept sees self-concept as a product of the reflected appraisals of significant people in the individual's life. Here, self-concept is being perceived as being constructed on the edifice of social comparison.

In a related study, Frankly (2011) carried out a study to find out the reasons for poor academic performance. The main aim of the study was to find out if self-concept influences academic performance of students in English language in Gboko, Benue state, Nigeria. A 21-item questionnaire was administered to 943 students randomly selected from both private and public secondary schools. The respondents were to indicate which behaviour students had engaged in, that had resulted to a number of different types of behaviour. Simple percentages and charts/frequencies were used as statistical tools in analyzing data gathered. The results showed that about 40% (10 out of 21) respondents indicated positive self-concept in academic which means that

self-concept devalues academic performance as may be seen as being internally motivated. This implies that internally motivated students believe that success and failures are responsibilities of oneself, whereas the externally motivated students believe that success or failure depends on factors outside oneself such as fate, luck, chance and godfatherism and this results to low academic self-concept and poor academic performance.

Also, Ngwu (2016) conducted a study on academic self-concept and job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. The main aim of the study was to find out the influence of academic self-concept on job performance of secondary schools teachers in Cross River State. 900 secondary school teachers were sampled randomly from 4654 teachers in 34 secondary schools in the state. A 30-item structured questionnaire was used to gather information and the data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation technique. From the analysis, the findings revealed that teachers who had high academic self-concept performed high on teaching job. This was tested at 0.05 significant level with 898 degree of freedom. The results indicated that academic self-concept is positively related to academic activities such as job performance and academic performance. But those who are academically weak develop inferiority complex and that could also result to poor job performance by the teachers.

In a related study to find out reasons for poor academic achievement, Armstead (2012) discovered that academic self-concept is related to cheating in examination. The author carried out a study in an English university. A questionnaire consisting of 21 cheating behaviour on students was administered to 943 students. The respondents were asked to indicate which or the behaviour they had engaged in. The result showed that cheating consists of a number of different types of behaviour rather than being a unitary concept. Reasons for poor academic achievement were given in frequency and expressed in percentages. The result also showed that about 49% (10 out of 21) indicated self-concept. They indicated that cheating in examination would devalue their academic achievement. This group of students who feel that cheating would devalue their academic achievement may be seen as being motivated internally. Internally motivated students believe that their success or failures are their responsibilities, whereas the externally motivated students believe that their success or failures depend on factors outside themselves, such as fate, luck, chance and godfathers. This group has low academic self-concept and is more prone to cheating.

Theoretical framework - Attitude Theory by Ajzen and Fishmeim (1973)

Attitude theory was propounded by Ajzen and Fishmeim in 1973. The theory states that a person's attitude towards any object is a function of his or her beliefs. The

theory, according to the proponents, is used to test the relationship which assumes that people behave rationally which is based on reasoned actions predicated upon behavioural goals and attitude, which can be examined by studying the various attitudes that influence human behaviour or by examining its relation to a specific behavioural goal such as performance or achievement. Using the balance system concepts to explain attitude, Ajzen and Fishbein (1973) divided the theory into three considerations:

1. The first has to do with beliefs about the usefulness or desirability of certain behaviour
2. The second relates to expressed intention to perform the behaviour
3. The third has to do with the subjective norm which has to do with performance based on the reasoned behaviour.

According to Ukpong (2017), the following three considerations are critical circumstances when the behaviour of people needs to be changed.

1. Cognitive components: The ideas and proposition that express the relations between socialization and altitudinal objects (e.g. hard water waste too much soap).
2. Affective or emotional component: Emotional or feelings that accompany the idea (e.g. dislike for hard water)
3. Behavioural components: The predisposition or readiness for action (e.g. refused to use hard water for washing)

This conception of attitude as a balanced system explains the apparent stage and nature of attitude. For instance, if a student has experience satisfaction with concaved benefits of schooling, the positive experience about value of school will produce positive cognition about school. According to Kumara (2017), the positive cognition will in return generate positive feelings of affection about the value that school stands for which will in turn manifest in individuals action to ensure that the student make the very best of school.

The bonds between the three components of attitude are quite logical and are positively interconnected to produce a positive attitude of the individual toward school and learning of Social Studies. An opposite experience of understanding a theory produces negative attitudes. It could be drawn from this theory that students attitude is related to academic achievement in Social Studies such that a positive attitude towards academic work could lead to high achievement, a negative attitude on the other hand could lead to discouragement thus poor achievement.

Statement of the problem

Poor academic achievement has become a critical concern of all educational stakeholders. The ability of the teacher to improve students' learning and then attain desired result implies a change in the instructional processes or practices of a teacher. It is the duty of the schools or educational system to put in place sufficient structures that will promote the kind of instructional practices that may yield better academic results as every classroom teacher should be equipped with professional skills and practices for effective teaching and learning.

By its newness, nature and scope, Social Studies is a problem solving discipline whose contents are deeply imbedded in the environment as it has profound implication on the curriculum and students outcomes. This therefore conferred serious responsibilities on the teacher as majority of Social Studies teachers are not professionally trained in methods, contents and competency. Some are incompetent in their instructional planning, teaching strategies, and instructional resources utilization and evaluation procedures. This posed a big problem for the learners, teachers and the school.

In an effort to improve this situation in the study area, the state government adopted certain measures such as yearly teachers' training programme, constant payment of salaries, renovation of schools, procurement of teaching facilities and introduction of some incentives such as payment of rural allowance and science teachers allowance to improve students' academic achievement, yet the situation remain the same and if not even worse. Government, teachers, parents and students are therefore in a dilemma of what to do. Could this poor academic achievement be as a result of teacher self-concept?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of teacher psycho-social variables on the academic achievement of Social Studies students in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the influence of teacher self-concept on student's academic achievement in Social Studies.

Research question

The following research question was posed to guide the study: how does teacher self-concept influence student's academic achievement in Social Studies?

Statement of hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested in this study: teacher self-concept does not significantly influence students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was Ex-post Facto. This is because the design studies phenomena after they have already occurred. Ex-post Facto was considered suitable for the study because the nature of variable that was investigated which is self-concept had already occurred as the researcher was to find out the possible causes and effects in order to establish the caused factors.

The research area for this study was the entire Cross River State comprising eighteen (18) Local Government Areas. The state is made up of three (3) education zones namely: Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja. Calabar zone is made up of seven (7) Local Government Areas (Akamkpa, Biase, Akpabuyo, Odukpani, Bakassi, Calabar municipality and Calabar South), Ikom zone is made up of six (6) Local Government Areas (Boki, Ikom, Etung, Obubra, Yakurr and Abi); while Ogoja education zone comprises five (5) Local Government Areas (Yala, Ogoja, Bekwarra, Obudu, Obanlikwu).

The population of the study was made up of Social Studies Teachers and Students at the junior secondary school level of education in 2017/2018 academic session. According to records obtained from Planning, Research and Statistic Unit of the Ministry of Education (2018), there are three hundred and eighty two (382) Social Studies Teachers and ten thousand four hundred and two (10,402) Social Studies Students spread out in a total of two hundred and forty two (242) Public Secondary Schools. The schools are clustered in three Zones - Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja. Both male and female teachers and students constitute the entire population.

The sampling technique adopted for the study was the purposive sampling technique. The sample for this study was the entire 382 Social Studies teachers, and 10 % of students in JSS III in 2017/2018 academic year in the research area randomly drawn from the classes of each of the teachers. The adoption of this technique is because the population of the study is manageable, hence, can be meaningfully handled by the researcher. Two instruments were designed for data collection, namely Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) and Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT).

The first instrument (SCQ) was constructed by the researcher; It had two sections, A and B. Section 'A' of SCQ had demographic data of the respondents while section B was constructed on a modified 4-point likert type scale that comprised 18 items which measured teacher self-concepts. Each sub-variable in the questionnaire carried 6 items with options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The second instrument, Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT), measured students' academic achievement in Social Studies. It was a standardized test adopted from the 2016/2017 JSS3 examination conducted in the State by Ministry of Education, Calabar and administered on Social Studies Students sampled in 2017/2018 academic year. Each item had options A, B, C, D. The independent t-test was adopted as the appropriate statistical technique in testing the hypothesis. This is because the researcher was comparing the mean academic achievement of Social Studies students who were taught by teachers with negative self-concept and the mean academic achievement of Social Studies students taught by teachers with positive self-concept.

Presentation of results and discussion of findings

Ho: Teacher self-concept does not significantly influence students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

This hypothesis considered the level of academic achievement of Social Studies students taught by teachers with negative self-concept and that of Social Studies students taught by teachers with positive self-concept. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of teacher self-concept on students' academic achievement in Social Studies

Teacher self-concept	N	\bar{X}	S.D	t-value	p-level
High	191	11.72	1.325	5.582*	.000
Low	191	24.30	2.589		

*Significant at .05 level; N = 382

The result in Table 1 revealed that, the p-level for the influence of teacher self-concept on students' academic achievement in Social Studies which is .000, is less than the .05 alpha level with 1398 degree of freedom. Also, the corresponding calculated t-value of 7.439 is greater than the critical value of 1.962 at .05 level with 1398 degree of freedom. The result further indicated that, the mean score of students taught by teachers with negative self-concept is 11.36, while that of those taught by teachers with positive self-concept is 24.94. This means that Social Studies students taught by teachers with positive self-concept achieved significantly higher (24.94) than their colleagues who were taught by teachers with negative self-concept (11.36).

From the above result, it can be deduced that teacher self-concept significantly influences students' academic achievement in Social Studies. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that teacher self-concept does not significantly influence students' academic achievement in Social Studies was rejected. While the alternate hypothesis which states that teacher self-concept significantly influence students' academic achievement in Social Studies was upheld.

The finding from the analysis of the hypothesis indicated that teacher self-concept significantly influence students' academic achievement in Social Studies. This might be so due to the fact that generally in life, people who are confident of themselves stand a better chance of succeeding than those who lack confidence of themselves. This finding agrees with Kumara (2012) who in a study to investigate the influence of self-concept on academic achievement of students in Economics in higher secondary school in Ghana, reported that there is a significant and positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of students at the higher secondary school level. The finding of this hypothesis is also in line with Muller (2012) who in a study on self-concept and job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria, found out that teachers with high academic self-concept performed high on teaching job, whereas those who are academically weak develop inferiority complex which could in turn result to poor job performance. Also in agreement with this finding is Essien (2014) whose study on self-concept to determine its relationship with attitude, revealed that students with positive self-concept displayed positive attitudinal dispositions than those with negative or low self-concept. This clearly shows that self-concept would influence students' behaviour manifestation during test taking, which might in no small way tell of the outcome of such a test. In addition, this finding is in consonance with Frankly (2011) who posited that students need positive self-concept to achieve success. The researcher added that a student's inability to apply good study skills will create room for poor academic achievement. This implies that the higher the students' level of self-concept, the higher their independence and intrinsic motivation which in turn translate to greater success in examination.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study examined teacher self-concept and students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings from the study revealed that self-concept significantly influence students' academic achievement in Social Studies. This implies that Social Studies teachers in Cross River State are doing well in their job but need more motivation to enhance better performance on a sustained basis.

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Teachers should be encouraged to be of stable disposition always, as this will enhance their productivity
- ii. Teachers should be regularly trained to be acquainted with current trends that will enhance the image/view they have about themselves. This will help teachers to be confident and proud of their job and bring about improvement in their performance at the job.
- iii. Teachers should be well motivated and remunerated. This will elicit positive self-concept from teachers and result in high performance at the job.
- iv. Government should make teaching work attractive and encourage in-service training of teachers on the job. This will not only make teachers aspire and acquire higher qualifications but also encourage them to stay on the job even after the acquisition of such higher qualifications.

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