



Self-Esteem, Attitude to Schooling and Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Pupils in Lagos State

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Abstract

This study examined the nexus between self-esteem, attitude to schooling and academic performance in basic science of junior secondary schools pupils, Lagos State. The study was guided by four null hypotheses. Adopting a descriptive survey research type, 456 students were sampled for the study through a multistage sampling technique. The data were analysed adopting Pearson r correlation statistics. Results showed that there were positive significant relationships between students' self-esteem and academic performance, $r = 0.143$, $p < 0.05$ and between students' self-esteem and attitude towards schooling, $r = 0.138$, $p < 0.05$. There was a significant composite contribution of self-esteem and attitude towards schooling to academic performance of pupils, $F(2, 453) = 69.716$; $p < 0.05$. Meanwhile, students with high self-esteem and have positive attitude to schooling had the best academic performance in Basic Science ($M = 28.14$, $SD = 5.781$). It is recommended that an enabling environment that would promote high self-esteem and positive attitude should be created.

Keywords: Self-esteem, students' attitude to schooling, academic performance, Basic Science

Introduction

Self-esteem is construed as those aspects or attitudes of individuals that are classified by the individual as self-evaluative. In a null shell, self-esteem is a personality construct which involves a self-evaluation about an individual that includes a person's disposition about oneself. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, self-esteem is a motivational theory in psychology which occupies the fourth level in the pyramid of human needs. Emler in Al-Obaydi, Doncheva and Nashruddin (2021) considered the fulfillment of individual's self-esteem need to be very important, because if not properly handled could have negative impact on the individual which could result in the individual developing weak self-esteem. Consequently, the individual could develop negative attitudes such as feeling of inferiority complex and lack of confidence in oneself and difficulty in dealing with one's social behaviour. Conversely, if the individual fulfils self-esteem needs optimally, such individual according to Al-Obaydi, Doncheva and Nashruddin (2021) could fit into his/her social environment and would be more fulfilled, and feeling more valuable in the social environment, thereby improving his/her learning achievement.

According to Bandura in Rameli, Alhassora, Bunyamin and Hanri (2020), self-esteem is seen as the personal evaluation of how well an individual can perform a course of action required to deal with some

prospective situations. Gulsen, (2017) argued that achieving this goal requires an individual's ability to persevere and remain focused to overcome challenges which could lead to full realization and attainment of the innate abilities. Individuals who have high self-esteem assign more importance to their strengths than their weaknesses and consequently, allow such individuals to develop positive feelings. As an important factor, self-esteem could assist individuals to develop recognition, confidence, strength, proficiency as well as high academic achievement and abilities. Arhin and Amoako (2019) who examined relationship between self-esteem of learners and their academic achievement reported that there existed a positive significant relationship between students' academic performance and self-esteem.

Furthermore, Naderi, Abdullah, Aizan, Sharir and Kumar (2009) examined relationships between academic achievement, self-esteem and gender; reported that self-esteem predicted academic achievement. More so, Laryea, Saani and Dawson-Brew (2014) who investigated the effect of self-concept on academic achievement, reported that self-concept predicted performance. Arshad, Zaidi and Mahmood (2015) assessed the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among university students, reported a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance.

However, Bahrami and Bahrami (2015) who assessed the relationship between self-esteem scores and performance reported a statistically significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. Damota, Ibrahim, Woldemariam and Kifle (2019) assessed the relationship between self-esteem, gender, and academic achievement, reported a non-statistically significant difference between self-esteem and academic achievements.

The importance of self-esteem in the acquisition of academic performance cannot be over-emphasized because there is an inverse relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. It is acclaimed that learners with high self-esteem generally tend to have higher academic achievements; than those with low academic achievements. Mruk and Christopher (2006) stated that one of the problems in academic performance and social life of students is low self-esteem. Individuals with low self-esteem appear to have psychological problems, such as lacking confidence in academic achievements. Alokun, Ogunsanmi, Makinde and Fashina (2014) reported a significant difference between the academic performance of students with high self-esteem and students with low self-esteem.

Attitude is a psychological trait that is unconsciously learned through experience. Attitude refers to a person's predispositions to evaluate whether issues, events, ideas or phenomena are positively or negatively perceived. Different schools of thought have defined attitude in different ways. Bunkure (2012) affirmed that attitude of a learner is a learner's state of mind which influences personal action of the individual. Parimala and Pazhanivelu as cited in Etobro (2019) refer to attitude as emotional tendencies with a set of complex feelings, desires, fears and convictions which are conferred on the individual's readiness to act due to varied experiences. From the definitions, attitudes could be referred to individuals' predispositions to behave in certain ways in response to people, events, issues, ideas and objects. Attitude could be said to be positive or negative that could be related to likes or dislikes about people, objects, issues, events or phenomena.

Attitude of a person is the person's state of mind that could influence the personal action of the individual. This implies that a learner's attitude towards learning could be reflected in the learner's thoughts, beliefs and opinions about schooling. Attitudes towards schooling are associated with academic achievement. Thus, learners with weak academic achievement would have a negative attitude towards learning, thereby, conceiving the idea that schooling will not assist them to be successful in the future (Candeias, Rebelo & Oliveira, 2010). Marks

cited in Verešová and Malá (2016) who studied attitudes of learners, teachers, parents and school administration towards the school environment, reported that lack of stimulating school environment could deter learners from achieving optimally in their academic programmes. Consequently, Kubiatio (2013) submits that if attitudes towards schooling are positive, also the academic achievement of learners gets better. In the same vein, Holúbková and Glasová (2011) related academic achievement with a positive attitude of a learner towards schooling, that will be reflected in producing the best individual performance in relation to a learner's predispositions.

Learners' attitude to schooling is concerned with their way of thinking, behaving and acting towards schooling. This could have serious impact on the learners and consequently on attitude towards schooling. Studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between attitude and academic performance (Dulton, 2004, Williams 2004, Adodo 2006 & Yahaya, 2020). In order to optimize the learners' attitude to schooling, the schooling environment requires the right infrastructural facilities, friendly and attractive programmes and adequate and quality supporting staff that will boost the learners' attitude to schooling, which consequently leads to developing a positive self-esteem towards schooling.

With respect to attitude to schooling, the learner's self-esteem is an important factor that plays insurmountable roles in an individual's behaviour which enables learners to be positive and have self-assurance towards schooling. According to Bandura in Rameli, Alhassora, Bunyamin and Hanri (2020) a powerful sense of self-esteem promotes individual's personal well-being and accomplishments in many ways and consequently transforming to positive attitude. Having a good self-esteem towards schooling will motivate, assist, guide and support the learners' schooling processes. This implies that both concepts, self-esteem and attitude are perhaps connected in accomplishing academic goals in Basic Science. Therefore, the study examined The Nexus Between Self-Esteem, Students' Attitude to Schooling and Academic Performance in Basic Science of Junior Secondary Schools in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The study was guided by four null hypotheses.

1. Learners' self-esteem and attitude towards schooling have no significant relationship.
2. Self-esteem and academic performance of learners in Basic Science have no significant relationship.
3. Attitude towards schooling and academic performance of learners have no significant relationship.

4. Self-esteem and attitude towards schooling have no significant composite contributions to academic performance of learners in Basic Science.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research type was adopted in the study. The study population of the study comprised all students in junior secondary schools in Ojo local government of Lagos State. Multistage randomly sampling technique was employed. All the Junior Secondary Schools in the state were clustered into twenty local government education areas. Six junior secondary schools were selected adopting systematic sampling technique. Four hundred and fifty-six students were selected adopting systematic sampling technique. Out of the 456 students sampled for the study, there were 232 (50.9%) male and 224 (49.1%) female students; 160 (35.1%) were 10-12 years old, 239 (52.4%) were 13-15 years while 57 (12.5%) were above 15 years old. 166 (36.4%) and 290 (63.6%) of the students respectively had positive and negative attitude towards schooling; while 214 students representing (46.9%) were of low Self-Esteem and 242 (53.1%) of them were of high Self-Esteem.

Three research instruments were employed in the collection of data. The first instrument is a 15-item researcher-developed instrument titled "Attitude of Pupils to Schooling Questionnaire (APSQ)". The instrument was developed on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree. APSQ is divided into two sections - Section A elicited data on pupils' demographic information and Section B focused on statement that elicited information on the attitude to schooling. The initial draft copy of the instrument comprised 23 items and was given to five experts in measurement and evaluation to establish both face and content validity. The experts were requested to rate the items on a modified 3-point Likert-type scale on a-1 to 3 continuum of useful and necessary, useful but not

necessary and useful with little modifications. The results from the experts were subjected to Content Validity Ratio (CVR). The CVR of the items ranged 0.2 to 1 – 0.2 indicating that only one expert rated the item not to be necessary while one (1) shows that all the experts rated an item to be necessary. Based on the ratio of each item, some items with a CVR of 0.2 to 0.6 were discarded while those items with a CVR of 0.8 to one (1) were retained; others with CVR of 0.6 to 0.7 were modified. Thus, the final form of the instrument had 16 items.

The second instrument is self-esteem scale adopted from Rosenberg. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale is a-10item instrument that elicit information on the pupil's self-esteem, developed on a-4Likert scale of Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree. Scoring involved totaling the individual 4-point items after reversing scoring for the negatively worded items. The maximum score is 40 while the minimum score is 04. Scores between 04 and 20 are indications of low self-esteem while, scores between 21 and 40 are indications of high self-esteem.

The instruments were pilot-tested on 45 junior secondary school pupils. The reliability of the instruments was established with Cronbach Alpha. This yielded reliability coefficient of 0.81 for Attitude of Pupils to Schooling Questionnaire (APSQ). Although, Rosenberg's self-esteem scale's reliability had been determined, a test-retest was carried out to establish the reliability, which yielded 0.84. The final copies of the instruments were administered by the researchers while responses elicited were collated, summarized and analysed using statistics of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Analysis

Learners' self-esteem and attitude towards schooling have no statistically significant relationship.

To test the null hypothesis, the data gathered were analyzed computing Pearson *r* correlation statistics as indicated in Table 1.

Results

Table 1: Tests of Correlation Between Pupils' Self-Esteem and Academic Performance

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	r	p-value
Self-Esteem	1.53	0.500	456	.143	0.002
Academic performance	21.91	4.849	456		

Table 1 reveals that there is positive significant relationship between pupils' self-esteem and academic performance, $r = 0.143$, $p = 0.002$. Since the relationship between pupils' self-esteem

and academic performance was significant, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between pupils' self-esteem and academic performance was rejected. It is therefore

concluded that as the pupils' self-esteem increases, there is a corresponding increase in their academic performance, and vice versa.

Table 2: Tests of Correlation between Pupils' Attitude Towards Schooling and Academic Performance of Learners in Basic Science.

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	r	p-value
Attitude	1.64	.482	456	-0.439	0.002
Academic performance	21.91	4.849	456		

Table 2 reveals that the relationship between attitude towards schooling and academic performance of learners was negatively significant, $r = -0.439$, $N = 456$, $p = 0.002$. Since the relationship between pupils' attitude towards schooling and academic performance of pupils was significant, the null hypothesis which

states that attitude towards schooling and academic performance of learners have no significant relationship, the hypothesis was therefore rejected. It is therefore concluded that as the pupils' attitude towards schooling increases, there is a decrease in their academic performance.

Table 3: Tests of Correlation between Attitude towards Schooling and Self-Esteem of Pupils

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	r	p-value
Attitude	1.6360	.48169	456	.138	0.003
Self-Esteem	1.53	0.500	456		

Table 3 reveals that the relationship between attitude towards schooling and self-esteem of learners was negatively significant, $r = -0.439$, $p = 0.002$, $r = 0.138$, $p = 0.003$. Since the relationship between pupils' attitude towards schooling and self-esteem

was positively significant, the null hypothesis was thus rejected. It is therefore concluded that as the pupils' attitude towards schooling increases, the pupils also increase in their self-esteem.

Table 4: Contributions of Self-Esteem and Attitude towards Schooling to Academic Performance of Pupils

Tests	Sum of Squared	df	Mean Squared	F	Sig.
Regression	2517.657	2	1258.828	69.716	.000
Residual	8179.657	453	18.057		
Total	10697.314	455			

R= 0.485 R Squared= 0.235 Adjusted R Squared= 0.232

Table 4 shows a combined significant contributions of self-esteem and attitude towards schooling of pupils ($F_{(2, 453)} = 69.716$; $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value of the F-ratio was significant, the null hypothesis which states that there are no significant contributions of self-esteem and attitude toward schooling to academic performance of pupils was rejected. The contributions of self-esteem and attitude toward science learning to academic performance of pupils accounted for 23.2% of the total variance in the model.

Discussion of Findings

Result in this study revealed that pupils with high self-esteem and have positive attitude towards schooling had the best academic performance in Basic Science. The relationship among the pupils' high self-esteem, attitude towards schooling and academic performance was positively statistically significant. This implies that this psychological trait, self-esteem predicts pupils' academic performance positively. The pupils knowing the import of education developed high self-esteem about themselves leading to self-confidence, recognition, proficiency and positive attitude that have enhanced

high academic performance. This finding is in concordance with Arhin and Amoako (2019), who assessed the correlation between students' self-esteem and their academic achievement reported a positive significant relationship between students' self-esteem and academic performance.

Also, Laryea, Saani and Dawson-Brew (2014) assessed the effect of self-concept on school achievement and reported that self-concept predicted performance. Arshad, Zaidi and Mahmood (2015) who assessed the relationship between self-esteem and university students' academic performance reported significant relationships among the variables. Having a high self-esteem toward schooling would have motivated, guided and supported the pupils' interest in learning leading to good academic performance in Basic Science. However, the finding in this study is in disagreement with the findings of Damota, Ibrahim, Woldemariam and Kifle (2019) assessed correlation among self-esteem, gender, and academic achievement and reported a difference between self-esteem academic achievements which was not statistically significant.

There is negative significant relationship between pupils' attitude toward schooling and academic performance of pupils in this study. This implies that attitude is an important variable to academic performance. Pupils who are favourably disposed to schooling have interest and studied confidently thereby performing well in their academics. This finding is in agreement with the studies by Finger and Schlessler (2002) and Williams (2004) who reported a significant relationship between attitude to a subject and academic achievement in that subject. Similarly, Yahaya (2020) who carried out a study to find out how self-concept and attitude to courses of study affect the academic performance of students in Umar Musa Yar' Adua University, Katsina reported a positive significant relationship between academic performance and attitude to course of study.

There is positive significant relationship between pupils' self-esteem and attitude toward schooling. The good self-esteem developed by the pupils motivated and guided them to develop positive attitude toward schooling. The finding is in support of the study by Rameli, Alhassora, Bunyamin and Hanri (2020) who examined the relationship between attitude and self-esteem towards online learning among student teachers found out that a positive significant relationship between self-esteem and attitude towards schooling. However, Nne and Ekene (2020) who studied the relationship between secondary school students' self-esteem and achievement goal orientation as correlate of academic

achievement in mathematics in Anambra State reported that students' self-esteem recorded a very low negative relationship with academic achievement in mathematics; though, student's self-esteem and achievement goal orientation significantly predicted their achievement in mathematics.

Conclusion

The study was carried out to examine the nexus between self-esteem, students' attitude to schooling and academic performance of junior secondary school pupils in Basic Science. Findings revealed that pupils with high self-esteem and have positive attitude to schooling had the best academic performance in Basic Science. There was a positive significant relationship among the pupils' self-esteem, attitude toward schooling and academic performance. This implies that this psychological trait, self-esteem predicts pupils' academic performance positively.

Recommendation

From the findings, it is recommended that schools, counsellors and parents should assist pupils to develop right attitude toward schooling to maximise their academic performance. Pupils should be encouraged to develop good self-esteem which will consequently motivate and guide them develop the right attitude to schooling.

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