



**SELF-CONCEPT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS
IN OHAFIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ABIA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study assessed the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in Ohafia Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. The study participants comprised of 400 respondents; 172 (43%) were male while 228 (57%) were female. 177 (44.3%) were from private secondary schools and 223 (55.7%) were from public secondary schools. Primary data was obtained using questionnaire titled: "Self-Concept and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (SCAAQ). The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through the Cronbach alpha coefficient with all the items scoring 0.64. Five hypotheses were generated with the first tested with Pearson r, while the remaining hypotheses (2-5) were tested with t-test statistics. The findings of this study revealed, among others, that there is a significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of the in-school adolescents. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others, that measures such as "rating scales, checklists, q-sorts and free-response method" should be put in place to check the poor self-concept and academic achievement of students in both private and public secondary schools so that it does not spell doom for the schools and lead to fewer intellectual students and low turnout of qualified manpower into the labour market.

Keywords: *self-concept, academic achievement, Public schools, Private schools and in-school adolescents*

Introduction

Adolescence is a dynamically evolving theoretical construct informed through physiologic, psychosocial, temporal and cultural lenses (Alexa, 2015). This critical developmental period is conventionally understood as the years between the onset of puberty and the establishment of social independence (Steinberg, 2014). The most commonly used chronologic definition of adolescence includes the ages of 10-18, but may incorporate a span of 9 to 26 years depending on the source (APA, 2002). Eisenberg and Morris, (2004) further described it as being a period of transition from dependent childhood to independent adulthood. It is described as a period of social and psychological development during which social awareness and behaviour undergo profound change.

The world is home to 1.2 billion individuals aged 10–19 years (UNICEF, 2008). According to Zubema, (2012), adolescents and youth segment of our population has continued to grow over the last two decades, with the adolescent's population increasing from about 12 million in 1991 to 19.5 million in 2006 and currently estimated at over 23 million. On the other hand, Sandeep and Rashmi (2017) observed that the stage of secondary school level or adolescence is usually a period of developmental transition in which an individual passes from childhood to maturity. During this transition, adolescents face so much psychological and sociological pressure in their life. They face psychological maturation, cognitive changes, sifting of societal and parental expectations, conflicting role demands, complexity in relation with parents and peers, choice of school and subject and adjustment in the school environment. Despite of all these changes, adolescence is also characterized as a time of evaluation of self and subsequent reformation of perceptions (Block, & Robins, 1993). Studies on in-school adolescents as touching the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement have become prevalent in recent years (Mahmudul, 2014, DeDonno & Fagan, 2013 and Marsh, 2005).

Academic achievement is a scholastic standing of a student in a given moment, and it is defined as the extent to which a learner is profiting from instruction in a given area of learning (Othman, 2011); while Self-concept as a theoretical term has numerous synonyms and definitions. For example, it is identified as self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), self-schema (Markus, 1977; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Cross & Markus, 1994), self-image (Offer, Ostrov, Howard & Atkinson, 1988), self-perception (Evans & Poole, 1991), self-representation (Cross and Markus, 1994), self-evaluation, and the likes. In practice, these terms have been inconsistently used, sometimes distinctively in scope or extension and sometimes synonymously. It is really hard to distinguish between different

psychological self-generalisations building the comprehensive conception of ourselves (Kobal, Darja & Janek 1998). For example, we cannot say that what we generally feel in a particular moment is our self-image, but what we feel in the other moment is our self-evaluation. For the avoidance of confusion, the authors will use the term self-concept in its general prevailing cognitive notion, keeping some other terms in a more narrow sense referring to the cognitive or emotional or both aspects of the self-concept (such as self-schema, self-representation, self-image self-evaluation, self-esteem).

In relation to self concept and academic achievement, Mahmudul (2014) asserts that, self-concept is only slightly positively associated with academic achievement of students. He further stated that “a person’s self is the combination of the individual beliefs, goals, values, interests and dispositions. Self-concept is one’s sense of the self as a separate individual who possesses a unique set of characteristics. There are several components of self-concept such as physical, academic, social, transpersonal, and the likes. The physical aspect of self-concept relates to that which is concrete. What we look like: our sex, height, weight, and so forth.. What type of clothes we wear, what type of car we drive; what kind of home we live in; and so forth. Our academic self-concept relates to how well we do in school or how well we learn. Two levels of academic self-concept are general academic self-concept and self-concepts in specific content related areas such as Mathematics, Science, Language, Arts, and so forth. The social self-concept describes how we relate to other people and the transpersonal self-concept describes how we relate to the supernatural or unknowns”.

Historically, males and females possess different beliefs about their academic competencies (Wigfield & Karpathian, 1991). In this regard, Entwisle (1990) found that girls can score low in secondary schools, but compete favorably in post graduate studies. Gender stereotyping still had a role to play in lower academic performance of girls, particularly in science and mathematics (Dambudzo & Schulze, 2012). Similarly, Rath and Nanda (2011) also observed that males maintain an independent sense of self that is separate from others; women by contrast, maintain an interdependent sense of self in which others are integrated into the self. Men are more likely to describe themselves in terms of their independence from others (emphasizing personal attributes and skills) and women are more likely to describe themselves in terms of their connections to others (emphasizing roles and relationship to others). Andrew (2002) found that boys scored significantly lower on social self-concept than girls. In this study, it is expected that, in the case of girls, physical and social self will influence their overall self-concept whereas in the case of boys personal self will determine their

overall self-concept. However, this may be due to biological, societal dispositions and learning style. As Tabone (2011) reported: "Self-concept is a type of self-appraisal that is created through interaction with one's environment and the influence of significant others. It is one's self-perception surmised from attitudes, feelings, and knowledge about one's skills, abilities, appearance, and social acceptance". Green, Nelson, Martin and Marsh (2006) believed that positive self-concept would be an extremely important goal for educational programs to promote, and held that it was linked to positive outcomes including higher academic achievement and effort.

According to Sandeep and Rashmi (2017) a positive relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement exist, they further established that 'this relationship was stronger for female students ($r = .28$) than that of male students ($r = .17$). Moreover, gender differences in the academic self-concept of the students were also found. Female students had significantly higher academic self-concept than male students'.

Woolfolk (2010) maintained that from 1st to 12th grade, competence beliefs decline for both boys and girls in Mathematics, Language, Arts and sports. In terms of self-esteem, both gender report declines in the transition to middle school. However, boys' self-esteem rises up in high school while girls' self-esteem stays low, with males showing higher academic self-concept than females at that stage (Kling, et al. 1999). Olatoye (2009), study habit, self-concept and science achievement of public and private junior secondary school students in Ogun State revealed that private secondary school students have better self-concept and academic achievement than the public secondary school students. He further pointed out that this may be due to the fact that private schools have better learning facilities and students have better study skills than their counterparts. Also, the United States Department of Education (2002) reported that Private school students generally performed higher than their public school counterparts on standardized achievement tests and they are more likely than public school students to complete a bachelor's or advanced degree by their mid-20s. On the other hand, Gbadegesin, Kemi and Emmanuel (2015) carried out a comparative analysis of students' performance in Economics in private and public secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Their study revealed that the students in private schools did better than their counterparts in public schools academically.

Maxwell and Amadi (2015) investigated self esteem among private and public secondary school students in Rivers State. The results of the study revealed that null hypotheses one and two were rejected, meaning that private school students,

both male and female demonstrated high self esteem, while public schools students demonstrated low self esteem. After conducting a comprehensive review of literature, it was found that the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement is well established outside Ohafia local Government of Abia State, Nigeria. Such researches are needed in Ohafia Local Government of Abia state context too. In view of this, it has become imperative to investigate the self-concept and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in Ohafia Local Government Area of Abia state, Nigeria. To have a better understanding of Nigerian adolescent, the present study will be important to understand the academic self of in-school adolescents students and its relationship with academic achievement.

Purpose of the Study

This study was mainly designed to find out the relationship between self-concept, and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in Ohafia Local Government Area of Abia State. Specifically, the study investigated:

1. The relationship between in-school adolescents' self-concept and academic achievement.
2. Differences between in-school adolescent males and females' self-concept.
3. Differences between in-school adolescent males and females' academic achievement.
4. Difference between academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools.
5. Difference in the self-concept and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools.

Research Questions

In order to explore the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of the secondary school students, the following research questions were generated:

1. Is there any relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of in-school adolescents?
2. Is there any difference between the in-school adolescent males and females' self-concept?
3. Is there any difference between in-school adolescent males and females' academic achievement?

4. Is there any difference between self-concept of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools?
5. Is there any difference between academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools?

Research Hypotheses

- Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between in-school adolescents' self-concept and academic achievement.
- Ho2:** There is no significant difference between in-school adolescent males' and females' self-concept.
- Ho3:** There is no significant difference between academic achievement of in-school male and female adolescents.
- Ho4:** There is no significant difference between self-concept of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools.
- Ho5:** There is no significant difference between academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey design because of the large targeted population, hence no other research method can provide this broad capability, which ensures a more accurate sample to gather targeted results in which to draw conclusions and make important decisions. The population comprised of all secondary school students in Ohafia Local Government Area of Abia State, 10 schools were randomly selected as sample. The sample consists of 400 SSS1 students who were randomly drawn from the selected 10 schools in Ohafia Local Government Area, with 40 students from each of the schools. The composition of the participants shows that out of 400 respondents 172 (43%) were male while 228 (57%) were female. 177 (44.3%), were from private secondary schools and 223 (55.7%) were from public secondary schools.

Instrument

Data for this study was collected using questionnaire titled: "*Self-Concept and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (SCAAQ)*". The questionnaire has two sections: section A, was used to elicit information on Biographical data of the respondents, while section B was made up of 40 items. The subscale was constructed on a five point Likert scale 1-5. Respondents were directed to rate the items most descriptive of themselves at the high end (3-5) while the items least descriptive of themselves was rated at low end (1-3). Also the JSCE results

of the students which were collected from the schools, were used to measure the respondents' academic achievement, as a correlate to students' self-concept.

Procedures for Data Collection

The researchers personally administered the questionnaire to the 10 selected schools. This questionnaire was administered on 400 respondents selected for the study. The researchers read the instructions and explained it to the respondents and also assured them that their responses would be treated as confidential and for the research purpose only. The administration of the questionnaire was done within 8 school days, to enable the researchers to collect back both the administered questionnaire and the JSCE result of the students from the different schools.

Method of Data Analysis

Frequency count and Percentages were used to analyse the demographic data while Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to test the first hypothesis and hypotheses 2-5 were tested with the use of t-test and the data was run with a Statistical package for Social-Sciences (SPSS 19.0), to determine the existence or otherwise of significant differences, at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results obtained from the statistical analysis of the research data are presented below to test hypotheses formulated in this study. The first hypothesis was tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics while hypotheses 2-5 were tested with the use of t-test and the data was run with Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 19.0)

Hypotheses Testing

Ho₁: *There is no significant relationship between in-school adolescents' self-concept and academic achievement.*

In order to test this hypothesis, data on the self-concept and academic achievement of the respondents were collated and subjected to simple statistical analysis as shown below.

Table 1: Summary Table of Pearson “r” Analysis of in-school Adolescents’ Self-concept and Academic Achievement of Respondents in English Language

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Cal.r-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Self-Concept</i>	400	161.43	22.33			
				0.14	339	0.07
<i>Academic Achiev. In English Lang.</i>	400	76.96	35.40			

P<0.05

Table 1 shows that the calculated r-value 0.14 with calculated alpha level of 0.07 computed at critical alpha of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha (0.07) level is lower than the calculated r-value (0.14) at critical alpha level (0.05). It, therefore, implies that, there is a significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of in-school adolescents. The students’ self-concept has a mean score of 161.43, while their academic achievement has a mean score of 76.96. This implies that there is a low relationship between in-school adolescents’ self-concept and academic achievement in English Language.

Table 2: Summary Table of Pearson “r” Analysis of in-school Adolescents’ Self-concept and Academic Achievement of Respondents in Mathematics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Cal r-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Self-Concept</i>	400	161.43	22.33			
				0.11	339	0.05
<i>Academic Achiev. In Math</i>	400	59.53	30.98			

P<0.05

Furthermore, the result in Table 2 reveals that the calculated r-value 0.11 with calculated alpha level of 0.05 computed at critical alpha of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha (0.05) level is lower than the calculated r-value (0.11) at critical alpha level (0.05). This implies that there is a low positive relationship between in-school adolescents’ self-concept and academic achievement in Mathematics.

Table 3: Summary Table of Pearson “r” Analysis of in-school Adolescents’ Self-concept and Academic Achievement of Respondents in Basic Science

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Cal r-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Self-Concept</i>	400	161.43	22.33			
				0.13	339	0.08
<i>Academic Achiev. In Basic Science</i>	400	90.55	32.40			

P<0.05

Furthermore, the result in Table 3 reveals that the calculated r-value 0.13 with calculated alpha level of 0.08 computed at critical alpha of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha (0.08) level is lower than the calculated r-value (0.13) at critical alpha level (0.05). This implies that there is a low positive relationship between in-school adolescents’ self-concept and academic achievement in Basic Science. The above analysis shows that the calculated r-value of students’ academic achievement in English language 0.14 is greater than the calculated r value of students’ academic achievement in Mathematics (0.11) and calculated r-value of students’ achievement in Basic Science (0.13). Therefore, it is in favour of students’ academic achievement in English language.

Ho₂: *There is no significant difference between in-school adolescent males’ and females’ self-concept.*

Table 4: t-test Analysis Showing the Difference Between Male and Female In-School Adolescents’ Self-Concept

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Cal t-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Males</i>	172	160.57	16.31			
				0.67	339	0.51
<i>Females</i>	228	162.07	25.97			

P<0.05

The result in table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value is 0.67 with calculated level of 0.51, computed at critical alpha level of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha (0.51) level is lower than the calculated t-value (0.67) at critical alpha level (0.05). That means that there is a significant difference between in-school adolescent males’ and females’ self-concept. This is in favour of the females with

the mean score of 162.07 greater than the mean score of 160.57 of the in-school adolescent males.

Ho3: *There is no significant difference between academic achievement of male and female in-school adolescents.*

Table 5: t-test Analysis Showing the Difference between Male and Female In-School Adolescents' Academic Achievement

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Cal t-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Males</i>	172	200.94	36.60	1.96	339	0.05
<i>Females</i>	228	193.95	34.33			

P<0.05

Table 5 reveals that the calculated t-value is 1.96 with calculated alpha level of 0.05 computed at critical level of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha (0.05) level is lower than the calculated t-value (1.96) at critical alpha level (0.05), it, therefore, implies that there is a significant difference between male and female academic achievement. The result indicates that the in-school adolescent females have a mean score of 193.95 lower than the males whose mean score is 200.94.

Ho4: *There is no significant difference between self-concept of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools*

Table 6: t-test Analysis Showing the Difference Between Private and Public In-School Adolescents' Self-Concept

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Cal t-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Private</i>	172	166.31	15.86	3.97	339	0.00
<i>Public</i>	228	157.55	25.73			

P<0.05

Table 6 reveals that the calculated t-value is 3.97 with calculated alpha level of 0.00 computed at critical level of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha (0.00) level is lower than the calculated t-value (3.97) at critical alpha level (0.05), it therefore implies that there is a significant difference between self-concept of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools. The result indicates that the in-school adolescents from public secondary schools have a mean score of

157.55 which is lower than the in-school adolescents' score from private whose mean score is 166.31.

H05: *There is no significant difference between academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools*

Table 7: t-test Analysis Showing the Difference Between Private and Public In-School Adolescents' Academic Achievement

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Cal t-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Private</i>	177	197.89	35.40			
				0.47	339	0.64
<i>Public</i>	223	196.21	35.86			

P<0.05

Table 7 reveals that the calculated t-value is 0.47 with calculated alpha level of 0.64 computed at critical level of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha (0.64) level is greater than the calculated t-value (0.47) at critical alpha level (0.05), it, therefore, implies that there is no significant difference between academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools. The result indicates that the in-school adolescent from private have a mean score of 197.89 greater than the in-school adolescent from public whose mean score is 196.21.

Discussion of the Findings

The first hypothesis stated says that: there is no significant relationship between in-school adolescents' self-concept and academic achievement. The finding showed that there is a significant relationship between in-school adolescents' self-concept and academic achievement. This implies that self-concept and academic achievement affect one another. Thus, increase in self-concept will lead to increase in academic achievement. This finding is in congruent with previous findings by (Mahmudul, 2014, Marsh, 2005 and Boulter, 2002) that self-concept is a primary cause of academic achievement that means self-concept fosters academic achievement

The second hypothesis postulated for the study is that, 'there is no significant difference between in-school adolescent males' and females' self-concept'. This study found a significant difference between in-school adolescent males' and females' self-concept. This may be due to the fact that in-school adolescent females have higher level of social self-concept than the males while the males have high physical self-concept than the females. This finding agrees with Rath

and Nandy (2012), who concluded that on some dimensions of self-concept, boys score higher and on some other dimensions girls score higher. Andrew (2002) found that boys scored significantly lower on social self-concept than girls. The finding of this present study is consistent with other studies like Kamble and Naik, (2013) that reported that males and females have different self-concepts and that, males have higher self-concept than females.

The third hypothesis formulated holds that there is no significant difference between academic achievement of in-school male and female adolescents. The finding of this current study shows that there is a significant difference between in-school adolescent males' and female' academic achievement. This finding corroborates the findings of other researchers such as Entwisle (1990), Dambudzo and Schulze (2012), and, Rath and Nanda (2012) who concluded that boys usually have higher academic achievement than the girls.

The fourth hypothesis put forward for the study says: 'there is no significant difference between self-concept of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools'. Furthermore, this study found that there is a significant difference between self-concept and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in both private and public secondary schools. This finding supports Olatoye's (2009) position that private secondary school students have better self-concept and academic achievement than the public secondary school students. This present findings is in line with the report of United States Department of Education (2002) which reported that Private school students generally performed higher than their public school counterparts on standardized achievement tests. Beyond this, they are more likely than public school students to complete a bachelor's or advanced degree by their mid-20s.

The last hypothesis for the study states that there is no significant difference between academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools. The finding shows that there is no significant difference between academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools. This finding is in contrast with Gbadegesin, Kemi and Emmanuel (2015) who observed that the students in private schools did better than their counterparts in public schools academically.

Conclusion

The major purpose of the study was to find out relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in Ohafia, Abia State Nigeria. The outcome of the analysis showed that the general academic achievement of the in-school adolescents is high and the general level of in-school adolescents'

self-concept is also high. This means that the relationship between the two variables is reciprocal in nature. Arising from the findings of this work, it was concluded that:

- There is a significant relationship between in-school adolescents' academic self-concept and academic achievement.
- There is a significant difference between in-school adolescent males' and females' academic self-concept.
- There is a significant difference between academic achievement of in-school male and female adolescents.
- There is a significant difference between self-concept of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools.
- There is no significant difference between academic achievement of in-school adolescents in public and private secondary schools.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of this study, the researchers recommend that:

1. Teachers and parents should strive to improve simultaneously both self-concept and academic achievement to ensure long lasting and positive development of students' academic outcomes.
2. Curriculum planners should put in place programmes that will enhance academic achievement of male and female students in school; employ qualified manpower to educate the students for better tomorrow.
3. Self-concept is also composed of the social, emotional and physical dimensions (Lewis & Knight, 2000). Therefore, it becomes imperative for parents and teachers that they should emotionally attach with their adolescent children/students and also facilitate the social development and physical requirements related with their academic need.
4. Measures such as "rating scales, checklists, q-sorts and free-response method" should be put in place to check the poor self-concept and academic achievement of students in both private and public secondary schools so that it does not spell doom for the schools and lead to fewer intellectual students and low turnout of qualified manpower into the labour market.

5. Principals of schools and other administrators in the Ministries of Education should put hands on deck for proper training and boosting students' self-concept.

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