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# Self-Concept and Students' Academic Performances in College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT [ENGLISH/ANGLAIS]

The study examined the influence of self-concept on academic performance among students of College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa state-Nigeria. A total of 412 participants were randomly selected for the study. There were 210 male (51%) and 202 female (49%) who participated in the study. A validated instrument on self-concept and academic performance with Cronbach's Alpha reliability of .540 and Factor Analysis ranging from .578 to .814, designed by the researcher was used. Three hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. Result indicated that a statistical significant relationship existed between students' high and low in self-concept and academic performance. A significant relationship exists between the self-concept and academic performance of fresh (NCE1) and final year (NCE3) students. The finding also reveals no significant relationship between the self-concept and academic performance of male and female students. Based on this finding, it was recommended that the parents, teachers, guardians, government, and the society should encourage positive and high self-concept in order to improve students' academic performance.

**Keywords:** Academic performance, college, self-concept, parents, teachers; guardians, government

## RÉSUMÉ [FRANÇAIS/FRENCH]

L'étude a examiné l'influence de l'image de soi sur le rendement scolaire chez les élèves du Collège of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa dans l'état du Nigeria. Un total de 412 participants a été choisi au hasard pour l'étude. Il y avait 210 hommes (51 %) et 202 femmes (49 %) qui ont participé à l'étude. Un instrument validé sur le concept de soi et sur le rendement scolaire avec la fiabilité de Alpha Cronbach de 0,540 et l'analyse factorielle allant de 0,578 à 0,814, conçu par le chercheur a été utilisé. Trois hypothèses ont été testées à l'aide des statistiques de corrélation de moment de produit de Pearson. Le résultat a indiqué qu'une significative relation statistique existait entre les étudiants, le haut et bas concept de soi et le rendement scolaire. Une relation significative existe entre le concept de soi et le rendement scolaire des nouveaux élèves du collège(NCE1) et ceux en dernière année (NCE3). Ce constat révèle également une absence de relation significative entre le concept de soi et le rendement scolaire des élèves de sexe masculin et de sexe féminin. Partant de ce constat, il a été recommandé que les parents, les enseignants, les tuteurs, les gouvernements et la société doivent encourager le concept de l'estime de soi positif et élevé dans le but d'améliorer le rendement scolaire des élèves.

**Mots-clés:** La performance académique, college, concept de soi, les parents, les enseignants, les tuteurs, gouvernement

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## INTRODUCTION

Self-concept has become an important subject in Psychology because of its influence on behavior. With emphasis on educational attainment in Nigeria, the study of the influence of self-concept on academic performance has been a significant exercise [1]. Both positive and negative self-concepts have relationship with academic output of students [2].

Self-concept of male and female may differ considerably and has direct relation with their academic achievement. Similarly, self-concept of fresh and final year students may influence their academic performance differently in College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State.

Colleges of Education are institutions for higher or professional education where students are trained to become professional teachers and holders of Nigeria Certificate in Education - NCE [3]. These professional teachers assist in the development of students' self-concept and academic performance. Furthermore, positive and negative, and high and low self-concepts are qualities and quantities of self-concept respectively, that influences and determine students' academic performance in school. These qualities and quantities are influence by existing components of self; self-image, self-esteem, and ideal self.

### Self-Concept

The self-concept is a characteristic inherent in the personality of every individual. But different individuals have self-concept in varying qualities as suggested by the term "positive and negative" self-concept and in varying quantities as implied by the term "low and high" self-concepts [4]. Self-concept is therefore defined as an organized and consistent way an individual thinks, feels, and reacts to issues concerning himself or herself arising from his/her personal experience in life [5]. Thus, self-concept is the set of feelings and cognition about oneself. It influences our thoughts, behaviors, and performances in school. Self-concept is very significant to Psychologists and educationists because whatever a person feels or thinks about himself is very important and could be a strong determinant of his behavior, even at school (academic performance). The components of "self" include *self-image*, that which refers to the sort of person an individual thinks he is; *self-esteem*, which refers to how favorable an individual regards himself;; and *ideal-self*, which represents the ideals of behavior manifestations an individual aspires to be [6].

According to a popular scholar [7], self-concept is the image an individual has of himself/herself which is a composite of the beliefs he or she has about himself or herself, including his or her physical, academics, psychological, social and emotional characteristics, aspirations and achievements. Self-concept could be viewed as the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. Self-concept entails all the beliefs about the individual self and is essentially an individual's self-judgment of his own abilities, influence and popularity.

### Academic Performance

In educational institutions, academic performance is the outcome of educational goals that are achieved either by students or the teacher, i.e., how well a student meets standards set out by local authority or the institution itself [8]. Academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers [9]. It is the ability to study and remember facts and being able to communicate your knowledge verbally or down on paper. Thus, it implies a process where a student's success in school is measured to determine how they stand up to others in the same areas.

### Self-Concept and Academic Performance

Numerous studies have reported significant influence of self-concept on academic performance (10, 8, 11). A typical example of items that are used to assess self-concept and academic performance include: "I am proud of my grade," "exams are not challenging for me." In general, this studies show that self-concept influences students' academic performance [10]. One study observed the downward comparison (in which an individual look at those less fortunate or accomplished than him, this raise his self-concept), and upward comparison (can lower it). Thus, how good a student is, studies suggest that, will be based on the social comparison you make [12]. Similarly, self-concept theory also holds that feeling positive about oneself has numerous social outcome including academic performance [13].

Another study maintained that, an ideal-self person always admires the successes of others and aspires to attain similar height. Such heroes become standard for their admirers, who attempt to reach such standards. Such aspirations in learning can be very effective in enhancing academic performance [5]. It is therefore not surprising that many researchers (14, 6, 15] had conducted studies on self-concept to establish its relationship with academic performance in general. Subsequently, it was observed that learners with high levels of self-concept are active learners who have strong desires for learning use of problem-solving skills. Such learners have the capacity to engage in independent learning activities, and manage their own learning [16]. Also, investigation revealed that low achievement might be related to a student's conception of himself as being unable to learn academic materials [14]. However, recent study reported that children in a classroom where the teacher helps pupils to clarify their self-concepts and to accept themselves as they are, recorded more significant positive performances than children taught by a teacher who emphasizes only correct answers and the passing of examination [15].

Furthermore, it was identified that gender differences in self-concept and academic performance in a given domain can be affected by the achievement within another academic domain [11]. For instance, a study following a national sample of male and female students for a three-year-period found that male students who received a high grade in one academic domain (Mathematics) demonstrated lower self-concept within another domain (English) at a later point in time, and

vice-versa [15]. Marsh found that students' level of academic self-concepts is also influenced by their prior academic achievements, as indicated by their grades and their response to academic exercise such as questionnaire. Hence, the relationship between self-concept and academic performance seems to be reciprocal in nature, with each affecting the other; that is, each is mutually reinforcing to the extent that a negative or positive change in one facilitates a commensurate change in the other [10].

### Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the influence of Self-concept on Students' Academic Performance of College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State. In order to achieve this aim, the study therefore posed the following hypotheses:

- H01:** There will be no significant relationship between Academic Performance of high and low self-concept students
- H02:** There will be no significant relationship between the self-concept and academic performances of fresh and final year students.
- H03:** There will be no significant relationship between the self-concept and academic performance of male and female students.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design

The study seeks to explore the influence of self-concept on academic performance of students of College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State. To meet up the expectation of the study, correlational research design was adopted [17] in order to establish relationship between self-concept and academic performance. This design does not allow the researcher to manipulate the variables [18]. Also, the research adopted the survey design, which will enable the researcher to move to the study area and administered an instrument to the participants who are students of College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State.

### Population

The target population for the study covers the fresh students (NCE-1) and final year students (NCE-3) of College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State. Both male and female students within the selected level comprise the population for the study.

### Sample

The participants in the study were randomly selected 201 fresh students (NCE-1) and 211 final year students (NCE-3) with a total of 412 students of College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State. Participation was on voluntary basis. A correlational design was used for the study; because the design described the degree of association between the variables studied. Their age ranges between 18 and 40 years. The educational attainment ranged between NCE-1 (new students) and NCE-3 (final years students). Male and female at both levels participated.

### Instrument

A 24-item Likert-type questionnaire that measures self-concept with five response options ranging from SA, A, UN, D, and SD was used. The instrument was designed by the researcher with the help of an expert for face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using a pilot sample of the total scale of 72 participants, which showed Cronbach's Alpha reliability of .540 and Factor Analysis ranging from .578 to .814, which proved the instrument valid and can be used for the study.

### Procedure

Data were collected using the 24-item Likert-type inventory through the assistance of volunteered students from different levels that helped in the administration and subsequent collection of the instrument. The instrument was administered on the participants on the same day and students' responses were collected on the spot to ensure maximum returns and control of extraneous variables. Participation was on voluntary basis and the students were assured of confidentiality of their responses.

### Data Analysis

The study used the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics [18] in order to examine the relationship between self-concept and academic performance. The corresponding r-table values were obtained at the 0.05 level of significance to ascertain significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined the influence of self-concept on academic performance among fresh (NCE-1) and final year (NCE-3) students of College of Education,

Akwanga, Nasarawa State. The study also looks at the high and low self-concept, and that of the male and female self-concept and academic performance.

The findings from the first hypothesis on the table one above shows that a significant outcome was obtained from the calculation, indicating that there was a significant relationship between students' high and low in self-concept and academic performance. This is because the calculated  $r$  ( $r = 27.0$ ) is greater than the observed value ( $r = 0.195$ ) at the 0.05 significant level. Consequently, having the mean of high=101.0 and low=83.0;  $t.cal=27.0$ ;  $t.obs=0.195$ ;  $df = 410$ ;  $P<0.05$ . Hence,

we agreed to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). This implies that relationship exists in the degree of self-concept between (high and low self-concept) and academic performance. This result is supported by [17], which maintained that learners with high levels of self-concept are active learners who have strong desires for learning and using problem-solving skills. Such learners have the capacity to engage in independent learning activities, and manage their own learning. However, there are no conclusive studies that clearly identify the direction of the link which joins these two variables that can alter the result of differing degrees [19].

**Table 1:** Relationship between the Self-Concept (SC) and Academic Performance

Variable	Number of Observations	Academic Performance						
		Mean	SD	Df	t.Cal	t.Obs	p	Remark
High SC & AP	217	101.0	5.4	410	27.0	0.195	0.05	Significant
Low SC & AP	195	83.0	8.1					

Mean of high=101.0 and Mean low=83.0;  $t.cal = 27.0$ ;  $t.obs = 0.195$ ;  $df = 410$ ;  $p<0.05$ . Hence, we agree to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ )

**Table 2:** Relationship between Self-Concept and Academic Performance of fresh (NCE-1) and final year (NCE-3) students

Class Level	Number of Observations	Academic Performance						
		Mean	SD	df	t.Cal	t.Obs	p	Remark
NCE-1	201	94.7	10.1	410	4.5	1.96	0.05	Significant
NCE-3	211	98.7	12.1					

Mean of NCE-1=94.7 and NCE-3=98.7;  $t.Cal=4.5$ ;  $t.Obs=1.96$ ;  $df=410$ ;  $p<0.05$ . Hence, we agree to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ).

**Table 3:** Relationship between the Self-Concept and Academic Performance of Male and Female Students.

Gender	Number of Observations	Academic Performance						
		Mean	SD	df	t.Cal	t.Obs	p	Remark
Male	210	92.0	11.3	410	-.265	5.99	0.05	Not Significant
Female	202	92.2	11.4					

Mean of Male=92.0 and Female=92.2;  $t.Cal= -.265$ ;  $t.Obs=5.99$ ;  $df=410$ ;  $p>0.05$ . Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ).

The second hypothesis, which states that there would be no significant relationship between the self-concept and academic performances of fresh and final year students, was rejected. This shows that a significant outcome was obtained from the calculation, indicating that there is a relationship between the self-concept and academic performance of fresh (NCE-1) and final year (NCE-3) students of College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State. Thus, the calculated  $r$  ( $r=4.5$ ) is greater than the

observed value (1.96) at the .05 significant level. This is presented as: mean of NCE-1=94.7 and NCE-3=98.7;  $t.Cal=4.5$ ;  $t.Obs=1.96$ ;  $df=410$ ;  $P<0.05$ . Hence, we agreed to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ). This is an indication that the students both in NCE-1 and NCE-3 in College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State differ significantly in both self-concept and academic performance. This result is not surprising since different researches conducted had similar findings (16, 19, 14]. Also,

different home background, family orientations, cultural values, religious faith and beliefs, previous school experiences and different societal influence both male and female fresh (NCE-1) and final year students (NCE-3) outside school adversely contributed in building each student as a unique personality with different self-concept and academic performance.

The third hypothesis, which states that there would be no significant relationship between the self-concept and academic performance of male and female students, was not rejected. This implies that the calculation obtained from table-3 above showed no significant outcome. The calculated  $r$  ( $r = -.265$ ) is less than the table-value (5.99) at the 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). This is presented as thus: Mean of Male=92.0 and Female=92.2;  $t_{Cal} = -.265$ ;  $t_{Obs} = 5.99$ ;  $df = 410$ ;  $p > 0.05$ . Hence, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is not rejected. This finding implies that male and female students of both NCE-1 and NCE-3 of College of Education, Akwanga are not related significantly in terms of their self-concept and academic performance. This is supporting the results obtained by other researchers in the field (19, 14]. In addition, the finding is in agreement with [11], who identified that gender differences in self-concept and academic performance in a given domain can be affected by the achievement within another academic domain. Perhaps, the finding that male and female do not significantly correlate in terms of their self-concept and academic performance may be attributed to the gender role difference prioritize by our religion (especially Islam) and traditional values, which had encourage sex-stereotype, stigmatization and gender discrimination which in turn provided a new sense of beliefs, feelings, thoughts, and expectations for both male and female in the academic institutions.

## RECOMMENDATION

In the light with the foregoing discussion and research findings, the researcher wishes to present the following recommendations that will enhance high and positive self-concept and academic performance among students of tertiary institutions Nasarawa State and Nigeria at large:

That parents and guardians should imbibe the culture of encouraging and strengthening the self-concept of their children rather, than condemning and criticizing the child with abusive statements that will make them feel inadequate, incompetent, and inferior; this would help in developing positive and high self-concept and academic

performance. Also, it is important for individual to learn to be characteristically independent, courageous, creative, confident in judgment, psychological stable, and less anxious, as this would help them to mobilize their efforts in order to meet the academic challenges and expectations. In addition, the training of professional personality psychologists that would sensitize both parents,, guardians, teachers, and students with low self-concept would go a long way in developing students' self-concept and their academic performance.

The teachers and the school management need to design an orientation exercise in form of paper presentation, seminar, or symposium in order to sensitize and enlighten the fresh students (NCE-1) on the expectations of the Campus, and the final year students (NCE-3) need guidance on the practice of teaching profession. This will no doubt remove the inferiority complex (low self-concept, which is synonymous to low academic performance) of the students. This result to both academic and psychological problems, leading to examination malpractice, cultism, drug abuse, prostitution, and other social vices, which reduces students' academic performance. The teacher personality, methodology, dedication, commitment and objectivity to his job will go a long way in helping the students to overcome the problems associated with lack of interest, inferiority complex, low self-concept, negative attitude, and phobia and anxiety to social and academic situations.

Furthermore, the government and non-governmental agencies also have some roles to play. These organizations should encourage the provision of practical instructional materials, funds for educational visits as well as employ more qualified teachers with professional training and expertise to teach the students and to indulge them on practical academic exercise that would increase their level of confidence and experience as well as their academic performance.

## CONCLUSION

The study examined the relationship between self-concept and academic performance among first year (NCE-1) and final year (NCE-3) students of College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State. From the research findings, differences exist in the self-concept and academic performance of fresh students (NCE-1) and final year students (NCE-3). This justifies that different individuals have self-concept in varying qualities as suggested by the term "negative and positive" self-

concepts and varying quantities as implied by “low and high” self-concepts. Hence, the study suggest that students with high self-concept are more popular, cooperative and persistent in class work, with low anxiety level, more supportive families and expectations of academic success. However, it should be noted that students with high and positive self-concept needs to interact with other peers and fellow learners in school in order to exchange valuable information, and to maintain high and positive self-concept and academic performance. Thus, more school life activities and experiences influence and determine the development of self-concept and academic performance. In addition, students' exposure to academic, social, and extra-curricular activities within the campus contributes to the development of students' self-concept and academic performance, as this research suggests significant difference between the self-concept and academic performance of fresh (NCE-1) and final year (NCE-3) students of Nasarawa State College of Education, Akwanga.

Furthermore, the study reveals no significant relationship between the self-concept and academic performance of male and female students irrespective of their academic domain. This suggests that gender does not influence or determine one's self-concept and academic performance. Thus, the technological advancement stimulates everyone irrespective of the gender to gain access to the knowledge of internet, satellites, and other modern facilities within the academic institution in order to develop one's self-concept and academic performance.

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Nil.

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