INFLUENCE OF SELF-CONCEPT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADULT LITERACY LEARNERS IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study examined the influence of self-concept on academic performance of adult literacy learners in Kano State, Nigeria. The study used descriptive research design to examine how self-concept influence Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills academic performance of basic literacy learners in the state. The population for the study consists of all 11,000 adult basic literacy learners of the Kano State Agency for Mass Education and a sample size of 357 adult literacy learners participated in the study. Adult Self-concept Scale (ASS) with 0.89 reliability index and results of the sampled learners in Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills were used to measure self-concept and academic performance of adult learners respectively. Three hypotheses raised were tested using t-test statistics. The findings revealed that adult learners with positive self-concept performed significantly better than learners with negative self-concept in Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. The study recommended that adult literacy facilitators and organizers should develop self-concept of learners positively through encouragement and counseling.

Introduction
Adult literacy programme is aimed at proving opportunities for adult illiterates who had no opportunity to acquire the skills of reading, writing and numeracy when they were children. In fact, basic literacy is seen as an opportunity for second chance for adult illiterates. Literacy has continued to play a vital role throughout human existence and has been a weapon by which societal goals and objectives are achieved. Through basic literacy participants are expected to acquire the skills of reading, writing and numeracy and using the skills for their day-to-day activities.

However, it has been observed that as adults enrolled into adult literacy programmes across the states in Nigeria many of them could not pass graduation examination and thus they could not be certificated (NMEC, 2008). Lending credence to this Alkali (2012) reported that the overall performance of learners in literacy programmes in Nigeria is fairly disturbing. For example out of 1.44 million learners who enrolled in the various adult literacy programmes in Nigeria in 2001, only 447,662 were awarded certificates (UNESCO, 2003 cited in Alkali, 2012). Zakari (2015) also reported a serious concern regarding poor performance of adult basic literacy learners in Kano State. He lamented that a number of completers of basic literacy in the state could not read as expected and in fact, they can hardly use the skill through literacy in the pursuant of their daily activities. This is a pointer to the fact that the academic performance or achievements of adult learners is not encouraging.

The poor situation of academic performance of adult learners has made researchers (Ghazvini, 2011; Sikhwani, 2014; Laryea, Saani & Dawson-Brew, 2014; Zakari, 2015; to look into reasons why learners are not doing well. One of the reasons advanced by researchers (Ghazvini, 2011; Sikhwani, 2014; Laryea, Saani & Dawson-Brew, 2014; Zakari, 2015) is the self-concept of learners. Self-concept is about the way people think about themselves. It should be noted also that the way we think about ourselves may be closely related to our ability to learn and achieve academic excellence. Some people for instance may have trouble with their work or their lives, not necessarily because of low intelligence or poor bearing or even poor motivation, but because they have learned to consider themselves inadequate (Matazu, 2014). Thus, how well or poorly
people perform in school or other area of endeavor depends not only on how capable they actually are, but also on how capable they feel they are.

Self-concept is a multidimensional construct that refers to an individual’s perception or view of self which is formed through experiences gained in the environment from reinforcement and significant others. It simply refers to how one thinks about oneself. It is based on self-knowledge and evaluation of value or worth of person’s capabilities that are formed through experience and interpretation of environment. It indicates past selves and future selves. Muhammad (2007) is of the opinion that self-concept of the learner; which is otherwise called self-construction or self-perception, plays great role in the academic achievement of the learners.

The study of self-concept has awakened growing interest in psychological research of recent years. Despite the profusion of studies devoted to it, it is difficult to find a unanimous, accepted definition of the term self-concept, given that it has been approached from different theoretical perspectives. Nonetheless, there is agreement among the different authors in that the term self-concept has a multi-dimensional nature. Self-concept is considered to comprise various dimensions, areas or facets, some of which are more related to certain personality aspects (physical, social, emotional), while others appear to be more linked to academic achievement (in different areas and subjects). Self-concept is the set of perceptions or reference points that the individuals has about himself; the set of characteristics, attributes, qualities and deficiencies, capacities and limits, values and relationships that the individuals knows to be descriptive of himself and which he perceives as data concerning his identity (Marsh & Seeshing, 1997). It is the set of knowledge and attitudes that we have about ourselves; the perceptions that the individual assigns to him and characteristics or attributes that we use to describe ourselves. It is understood to be fundamentally a descriptive assessment and has a cognitive nuance. The importance of self-concept stems from its notable contribution to personality formation. Self-esteem has to do with social competence, since it influences how the person feels, how he or she thinks, learns, values himself or herself, relates to others, and ultimately, how he or she behaves (Marsh & Seeshing, 1997). The theoretical model and definition proposed by Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) define the term self-concept as the perception that each one has about him, formed from experiences and relationships with the environment, where significant people play an important role. Self-concept, as a component of human personality development, has its own nature and peculiarity.

Several authors (Marsh & Seeshing, 1997) have tried to specify the nature of the term self-concept. To this end, they look at it as a compendium of seven characteristics or fundamental aspects: self-concept constitutes a psychological dimension; it is multidimensional; it has a hierarchical organization (a general self-concept and specific self-concepts); it is stable, but as we go lower on the hierarchy, self-concept becomes more specific and more susceptible to change; the different facets of self-concept become more differentiated among themselves with age and experience; self-concept includes both descriptive as well as evaluative aspects: self-concept can be differentiated from other constructs which it is related to, such as academic performance. Some authors, like Harter (1986), make interesting contributions, such as that general or total self-concept will be determined by the degree of importance that we assign to each of its specific components. If, when describing ourselves, our value judgments are satisfactory, then we obtain a positive total self-concept; in the opposite case we generate negative feelings and thus produce a negative global self-concept.

Belief an individual learner holds about him/herself has a role to play in a learner’s learning achievement. This belief is what is described as self-concept. According to Hattie (1992), self-concept has typically been defined in terms of the cognitive appraisal one makes of the expectations, descriptions, and prescriptions that one holds about one’s self. Huitt (1998) also added that, self-concept is a person’s perceptions of his or her own strengths and weaknesses. There are three aspects of self-concept which are; self-image (of what the person is), ideal self (what the person wants to be), and self-esteem (what the person feels about the discrepancy between what she/he is and what she/he would like to be) (Lawrence, 1996). Studies of the relationship between self-concept and achievement in educational settings have been a major focus of research and theory for many years (House, 1996; Hattie, 1992; Hamachek, 1995; Marsh, 1987).
Research (Marsh, 1992) has supported the belief that there is a persistent and significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement, and the change in one seems to be associated with a change in other (Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Craven, 1987). According to Shalveson and Marsh (1986), students’ attitude towards their ability to influence their academic outcome does affect their performance. Schneider, Gruman and Coutts (2012) argued that students’ feelings, attitudes, and perceptions they hold about their academic ability that is, academic self-concept, does affect their performance. When students have low academic self-concept they shift to self-handicapping. This method shifts blame away from the individual, and allows them to have excuses for failure. Students are more likely to achieve high marks when they believe in their own capacities and do not feel anxious about the learning process, (Schneider et al., 2012). In fact, when an adult learner has a bad previous learning experience is likely to see himself as a potential failure in future learning endeavour. This is because an individual who has a number of successful experiences is likely to believe in subsequent successful executions of similar behaviours. Bandura (1994) states that people will be more inclined to take on a task they believe they can succeed in. People generally avoid tasks where their self-concept is negative but will engage in task where their self-concept is positive. A strong sense of academic self-concept enhances students' academic accomplishment, quality of functioning and personal well-being (Adyemo, 2001). It is therefore imperative based on the above discussion to understand that the issue of self-concept among other variables can greatly affect the academic achievement of the learners. Consequently, it is in this light this study examined how academic performance of adult basic literacy learners who have positive self-concept is different from academic performance of adult basic literacy with negative self-concept learners in Kano state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Different categories of adult learners are found in Basic Literacy centers in Kano State. The differences in learners are found in how learners see themselves. There are those who see themselves as positive as regards to the learning and some others may see themselves as those who could not make it learning wise. The perceptions of these learners may affect their achievement academically and other wise. Since, the self-concept of learners may differ from one learner to the other and this difference may have influence on their achievement, it is not out of place to find out if there is difference in academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept. The problem of the study therefore was to assess the influence of self-concept on academic performance of adult basic literacy learners in Kano State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study were:

1. Examine if there is difference in literacy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State;
2. Examine if there is difference in numeracy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State; and
3. Examine if there is difference in life skill academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. Is there any difference in literacy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State?
2. Is there any difference in numeracy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State?
3. Is there any difference in life skill academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State?
Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant difference in literacy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State.
2. There is no significant difference in numeracy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State.
3. There is no significant life skill academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State.

Methodology
Descriptive research design was used to assess the influence of self-concept on academic performance of adult literacy learners in Kano State, Nigeria. The population for the study consists of all adult basic literacy learners of the Kano State Agency for Mass Education. There are 10 classes in each of the 44 Local Government Areas of the State comprising of 25 learners each totaling 11,000 adult literacy learners. Hence, the population of the study stands at 11,000 adult basic literacy learners. A sample size of 357 adult basic literacy learners was selected from the population. A multistage sampling technique was used. In the first stage, 14 Local Government Areas out of 44 LGAs were randomly selected. In the second stage, 2 Literacy classes were selected from each of the 14 LGAs totaling 28 Literacy classes. While in the last stage, 357 learners were randomly selected as sample for the study.

Adult Self-concept Scale (ASS), researcher self-designed scale was used to collect data from the respondents regarding their self-concept. The Scale has 10 items measuring self-concept on Very True, True, Not At All True and Not True Scale. Examples of statement made to measure learners’ self-concept include: “I want to be a literate person” and “I believe I can learn what I have come to learn at literacy centre”. A total range score of 40-18 provides an index of positive Self-concept while a total range score 17-1 indicates negative self-perception of respondents. Learners were required to respond to all the items which were positively worded along 4 point Likert-type Scale. The Scale (ASS) was validated through expert judgment to establish both face and content validity. The instrument was presented to experts in the areas of Adult Education, Educational Psychology and Test and Measurement at the Faculty of Education Bayero University, Kano for observation and modification. Their observations and suggestions were taken into consideration before the final instrument was produced for administration.

In an effort to determine the reliability of the instruments, the researchers trial-tested the instrument in 5 Literacy centers in Kano metropolis that were not part of the samples selected. The instrument were administered to 30 adult basic literacy learners and re-administered on interval of two weeks. The results from the first and second administrations of the instrument were correlated using PPMC and the indexes and consistencies of the instrument were established and the results yielded 0.89 permitting the conclusion that the instrument was reliable. The researcher with the help of literacy facilitators administered the Adult Self-concept Scale to all the sampled 357 adult literacy learners. The data obtained from Adult Self-concept Scale (ASS) was used to classify the learners’ self-concept into positive and negative self-concept.

To measure academic performance of adult literacy learners, the End of the Programme Literacy Examination results of the sampled learners in Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills were used. The hypotheses were tested with the use of t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS.

Results
H01 There is no significant difference in literacy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State
Table 1: T-test Summary of Self-concept in Literacy Academic Performance (N = 357)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Concept</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>57.70</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>3.220</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>54.32</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that on average, literacy academic performance of learners with positive self-concept (X= 57.70) was higher than the literacy academic performance of learners with negative self-concept (X = 54.32). This difference was significant at t-value (1.354), p-value (.001) < .05 significant level at 355 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference in literacy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State was rejected. Hence, there was significant difference in literacy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State.

H02 There is no significant difference in numeracy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State

Table 2: T-test Summary of Self-concept in Numeracy Academic Performance (N = 357)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Concept</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>59.10</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>5.491</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>53.20</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that on average, numeracy academic performance of learners with positive self-concept (X= 59.10) was higher than the numeracy academic performance of learners with negative self-concept (X = 53.20). This difference was significant at t-value (5.491), p-value (.000) < .05 significant level at 355 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference in numeracy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State was rejected. Hence, there was significant difference in numeracy academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State.

H03 There is no significant difference in life skills academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State

Table 3: T-test Summary of Self-concept in Life Skills Academic Performance (N = 357)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Concept</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>52.80</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>3.287</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>51.20</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that on average, life skills academic performance of learners with positive self-concept (X= 52.80) was higher than the life skills academic performance of learners with negative self-concept (X = 51.20). This difference was significant at t-value (3.287), p-value (.000) < .05 significant level at 355 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference in life skills academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State was rejected. Hence, there was significant difference in life skills academic performance of adult basic literacy learners with positive and negative self-concept in Kano State.
Discussions of Findings

The findings from research hypothesis one indicated that adult learners with positive self-concept did significantly better in Literacy academic performance than those with negative self-concept. It is very clear in the literature and experiences with adult learners that thoughts learners have about themselves influence their performance. There are learners who feel positive about themselves and there are those who feel negative about themselves, those with positive have tendency to do well while those who are not confident about themselves will not do well as reflected in this finding. This finding is also consistent with the findings of longitudinal studies of (Helmke & van Aken, 1995; Marsh & Yeung, 1997; Marsh, Hau & Kong 2002; Valentine, 2002) which show evidence of reciprocal relationships between self-concept and academic achievement.

Secondly the finding from hypothesis two reveled that that adult learners with positive self-concept did significantly better in Numeracy academic performance than those with negative self-concept. It is interesting to note that this finding is related to that of (Ghazvini, 2011; Zakari 2015) which reported that academic self-concept powerfully and positive predicts general performance in literature and mathematics.

The finding from the third hypothesis is also the same as the earlier ones that adult learners with positive self-concept did significantly better in Life Skills academic performance than those with negative self-concept in Knao state. The findings corroborate with that of Crawford (2013) who found out in his study that students’ self-concept influence their academic performance significantly. Crawford further found that the level of effort exerted by students in learning to a large extent contributes significantly to their self-concept which in turn boosts their academic performance. Zakari (2015) finding is also in support of the current study which reported positive correlation between self-concept and Life Skill academic performance.

Conclusions

The study has established that adult learners with positive self-concept did significantly better in Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills academic performance than those with negative self-concept in Kano State.

Recommendations

1. It is important by literacy facilitators to ensure that adult learners are motivated and encouraged to develop positive concept about themselves. That no matter their previous experiences in learning they can do well in Literacy. This can be done through counseling.

2. In fact, it should be made known to adult learners through special enlightenment that thinking positively about themselves can improve their Numeracy academic performance.

3. Life Skills lessons should be made more practical in order to encourage adult learners who are not positive about themselves in order to develop positive thinking about themselves in order to do better in their learning.
Reference


