

Assessment on the Relationship between Self-Concept and Academic Performance among Students in Federal College of Education Yola, Adamawa State

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Abstract

Case Studies

This study examined the relationship between self-concept and academic performance among students in the Federal College of Education (FCE) Yola, Adamawa State. A correlational survey design was adopted, with a population of 95 students (NCE II and NCE III). Using stratified proportionate random sampling, 48 students participated in the study. Data were collected through the Structured Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ) and analyzed using simple percentages. Findings revealed that students generally possessed a strong self-concept, reflected in their confidence, motivation, and satisfaction with abilities. Academic performance was also encouraging, supported by group learning and commitment to tasks, although challenges such as time management and balancing theory with practice were noted. Importantly, results established a strong positive correlation between self-concept and academic performance. The study concludes that enhancing students' self-concept improves academic outcomes and recommends integrating motivational teaching strategies, strengthening counseling support, promoting cooperative learning, and organizing workshops on time management and study skills.

Keywords: Self-concept, academic performance, correlational study, students, Federal College of Education Yola, Nigeria.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Self-concept is a broad construct that captures how people view and assess themselves across different areas, including academics, social life, and physical abilities (Marsh, Craven, & Martin, 2017). Specifically, academic self-concept refers to students' perceptions of their own competence in learning tasks. Learners with a positive academic self-concept are typically more motivated, persistent, and capable of handling academic difficulties effectively (Yeung & Craven, 2022). Research has shown a strong positive link between academic self-concept and performance outcomes (Alao & Oni, 2022; Umar & Aliyu, 2023). Students who believe in their academic abilities usually perform better because their confidence encourages active engagement and sustained effort.

Academic performance, on the other hand, denotes the degree to which students attain their educational objectives, often measured through grades, examinations, or teacher evaluations. It is widely recognized as a central measure of student learning

as well as institutional success (Agu & Onyekuru, 2020). Multiple factors shape academic performance, such as intellectual ability, quality of learning environments, family support, and psychological attributes like self-concept and motivation.

Within teacher education in Nigeria, the Federal College of Education (F.C.E.) Yola plays an important role in preparing future teachers across various fields. However, many students encounter both psychological and academic challenges that influence their outcomes, with low self-confidence in handling major subjects being one of the notable issues. Observations and performance records at F.C.E. Yola indicate differences in students' academic achievement, pointing to self-concept as a possible internal factor affecting their success.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The academic performance of students in tertiary institutions is a growing concern. At FCE Yola, several factors have been identified to influence students' performance, including teaching methods, learning materials, and socio-



economic background. However, psychological variables such as self-concept students’ perception of their own academic abilities are often overlooked. Low self-concept among students can result in poor classroom participation, reduced motivation, and eventual underperformance, while a positive self-concept may enhance persistence, practical involvement, and overall success.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the relationship between self-concept and academic performance among students in F.C.E. Yola, Adamawa State. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- i. Examine the level of self-concept among students at F.C.E. Yola.
- ii. Assess the academic performance of students in relation to their self-concept.
- iii. Determine the relationship between self-concept and academic performance among students in F.C.E. Yola.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the level of self-concept among students at F.C.E. Yola?
- ii. What is the academic performance level of students at F.C.E. Yola?
- iii. What relationship exists between self-concept and academic performance among students in F.C.E. Yola?

1.5 Hypotheses

- H₀: There is no significant relationship between self-concept and academic performance of students in F.C.E. Yola.
- H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between self-concept and academic performance of students in F.C.E. Yola.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant to various stakeholders in the education sector. Students will benefit by gaining awareness of how their self-concept can influence their academic success. Teachers and counselors will better understand the psychological needs of students and tailor support accordingly. Educational administrators will be guided in designing interventions that promote positive student self-concept, which may lead to improved outcomes. Researchers and policymakers can use the findings as a foundation for broader studies on psychological influences in education.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Self-Concept and Its Relevance

Self-concept refers to the way individuals perceive and evaluate themselves, encompassing their beliefs, attitudes, and

knowledge about personal identity and abilities. Marsh and Shavelson (2021) describe it as a complex and hierarchical construct that significantly shapes human behavior, particularly in educational settings. It includes domains such as academic, social, and physical self-concept. In academic contexts, a positive self-concept fosters motivation, resilience, and self-efficacy, all of which are critical for success in learning. For students in agricultural education, self-concept can influence how they assess their agricultural competencies, their confidence in schoolwork, and their general participation in academic tasks.

Academic Performance and Related Factors

Academic performance refers to the degree to which students achieve their educational objectives, usually assessed through grades, test scores, or teacher evaluations. It serves as a key marker of learning progress and achievement. Bong and Clark (2019) emphasize that academic performance is shaped not only by intellectual capacity but also by psychological and emotional factors such as self-concept. Students with higher academic self-concept tend to work harder, persist longer when faced with challenges, and set ambitious academic goals. In agricultural education, performance can be observed in students’ success in theoretical coursework, practical agricultural training, and research activities.

Link between Self-Concept and Academic Performance

The connection between self-concept and academic outcomes has been widely studied in educational psychology. Literature supports a two-way relationship between the two constructs. Marsh and Craven (2016) proposed the reciprocal effects model, which suggests that students’ self-concept directly influences their achievement, while academic success also strengthens self-concept. In practice, this means that agricultural education students who believe in their academic capabilities are likely to perform better, and their achievements will further reinforce these positive beliefs. This cyclical relationship highlights the need to nurture self-concept as a way to enhance students’ academic achievement.

Determinants of Self-Concept

Self-concept is a layered psychological construct encompassing beliefs, feelings, and perceptions individuals hold about themselves, including their attributes and competencies. Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (2016) argue that self-concept is multifaceted, structured, and relatively stable but becomes more refined with age and life experiences. It is shaped both by internal processes, such as reflection, and external factors, such as social interaction and feedback. Family background is a primary determinant, providing the earliest framework for developing self-concept. Coopersmith (2017) stresses that parental warmth, encouragement, and discipline styles significantly affect how children perceive themselves. Positive reinforcement builds confidence, while neglect or criticism often results in low self-esteem. Socioeconomic status also plays a role by determining access to educational resources

and opportunities.

Peer influence is another strong determinant, particularly during adolescence. Acceptance, friendships, and social interactions contribute to the development of social self-concept. Harter (2019) observed that during teenage years, peer validation becomes crucial in shaping perceptions of academic ability, social competence, and even physical appearance. Positive peer experiences enhance self-esteem, while bullying or rejection may damage it. Schools and educational experiences are equally important. Teacher-student relationships, school climate, and academic achievements influence academic self-concept. Marsh and Craven (2016) reinforce this with evidence of the reciprocal relationship between achievement and self-concept—positive experiences build confidence, while repeated academic failures can diminish motivation and self-worth.

Academic Performance and Contributing Factors

Academic performance reflects the extent to which learners or institutions achieve their educational objectives, often assessed through examinations, GPA, or other evaluations (Santrock, 2024). It is not solely determined by intellectual capacity but also by motivation, teaching quality, and learning environments. Motivation, whether intrinsic (driven by personal goals) or extrinsic (driven by rewards), is a strong determinant of achievement. Deci and Ryan (2020) emphasize that intrinsically motivated learners perform better, as they engage deeply with materials, persist through challenges, and adopt effective study strategies.

Teacher quality is another essential factor. Research shows that effective teachers—those who provide clear explanations,

employ engaging methods, and build supportive relationships—positively influence outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2020). Teacher expectations also matter. Rosenthal and Jacobson’s (2018) “Pygmalion Effect” highlights that students perform better when teachers hold high expectations for them.

Relationship between Self-Concept and Academic Achievement

The link between self-concept and academic performance has long been central in educational research. Self-concept shapes how students view their own abilities and influences behaviors such as persistence and strategy use (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 2016). The reciprocal effects model (Marsh & Craven, 2016) suggests a continuous cycle where self-concept enhances achievement, and achievement, in turn, reinforces self-concept. Bong and Skaalvik (2023) further emphasize that a strong academic self-concept promotes intrinsic motivation, mastery goals, and effective learning strategies. Empirical evidence, such as Valentine, DuBois, and Cooper’s (2014) meta-analysis, shows that enhancing students’ self-concept through targeted interventions leads to measurable academic improvement.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational survey design. The population consisted of NCE II and III students of F.C.E. Yola. Stratified random sampling produced 48 respondents. The Structured Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ) was used for data collection, and Pearson’s correlation coefficient was employed for data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex and Self-Concept

SEX	High Self-Concept	Moderate Self-Concept	Low Self-Concept	Total
Male	18 (75%)	5(21%)	1(4%)	24
Female	15(62.5%)	7(29%)	2(8.5%)	24
Total	33(68.7%)	12(25%)	3(6.3%)	48

Source: Field survey, 2025

The analysis shows that both male and female students generally reported high self-concept. However, males (75%) had slightly higher self-concept than females (62.5%). This supports Smith & Jones (2018), who noted that males often

overestimate their abilities, while females tend to underestimate theirs despite performing similarly. This suggests that gender differences in self-perception may influence how students approach their studies.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Origin and Self-Concept

SEX	High Self-Concept	Moderate Self-Concept	Low Self-Concept	Total
City	20(83%)	3(12%)	1(5%)	24
Village	13(54%)	9(38%)	2(8%)	24
Total	33(68.7%)	12(25%)	3(6.3%)	48

Source: Field survey, 2025

Students from urban areas recorded higher self-concept (83%) compared to rural students (54%). This difference could be explained by exposure and access to better preparatory schooling in cities, which gives students more confidence.

Bello (2022) also emphasized that environment and access to academic resources shape students’ self-concept. This indicates that interventions for rural students should focus on building confidence and exposure.

Table 3: Academic Performance of Respondents

Academic Performance Indicators	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Grades (CGPA/Results)	30(62.5%)	14(29%)	4(8.5%)	48
Class Participation	28(58.3%)	15(31.3%)	5(10.4%)	48
Participation Applications	25(52%)	18(37.5%)	5(10.5%)	48

Source: Field survey, 2025

The findings reveal that the majority of students achieved good grades (62.5%) and actively participated in class (58.3%). However, fewer students excelled in applying practical skills (52%). Female students, especially student-mothers, reported challenges in meeting deadlines due to household

responsibilities, supporting Adebayo (2020). Similarly, rural-origin students struggled more with practical applications, possibly due to limited prior exposure to modern facilities (Okeke & Fatima, 2019).

Table 4: Correlation between Self-Concept and Academic Performance.

Variables	Correlation (r)	Strength	Significance
Self-concept and performance	0.71	Strong	Significance

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.71$) between self-concept and academic performance. Students with higher confidence levels consistently performed better academically. This finding is consistent with Ogunleye & Musa (2021), who emphasized that self-efficacy is a major determinant of success. Similarly, Ibrahim & Okoye (2018) confirmed that belief in one’s ability strongly predicts achievement. Thus, enhancing students’ self-concept, particularly among females and rural students, can significantly improve academic performance.

be organized.

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Findings revealed that:

Students generally have a strong self-concept. Their academic performance is moderate to high, though challenges remain in time management and practical application. A strong positive relationship exists between self-concept and academic performance ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.05$). These findings align with earlier studies showing that psychological factors such as self-concept significantly influence academic outcomes (Smith & Jones, 2018; Bello, 2022; Adebayo, 2020).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that self-concept strongly influences academic performance among students in F.C.E. Yola. Enhancing students’ confidence and motivation can significantly improve academic outcomes. It is recommended that: Motivational teaching strategies be incorporated into classrooms. Counseling services be strengthened to boost students’ self-concept. Group study and cooperative learning be encouraged. Workshops on time management and study skills

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