Original Research   **Open Access**

Self-Esteem and Academic Success of Secondary School Students in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria and Counseling Interventions

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Abstract
The essence of this research was to investigate the influence of self-esteem on students' academic success in Calabar metropolis of Cross River State of Nigeria. Two hypotheses were raised to guide the study. Literature review was carried out accordingly based on the variables of the study. The random sampling technique was adopted which sampled three hundred and forty-five (345) students who were drawn from fifteen secondary schools which represented all the public secondary schools in the area of study. The Self-Esteem and Academic success questionnaire (SEASO) and Achievement Test in mathematics and English Language (ATMEL) were used to collect data. The independent t-test analysis was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The findings showed that there is a significant difference in the academic success of students with positive self-esteem than those with negative self-esteem. This implies that self-esteem significantly influences students' academic success. Based on findings of the study, it was recommended that students should boost their self-esteem as it is an important factor that strengthens the prediction of academic success in Mathematics and English Language. There should be school counseling intervention in improving self-esteem among students. Students should be trained on how to improve greatly in their self-esteem and academic efficacy.

Keywords: Students; Self-esteem; Academic success; Personality traits; Mathematics/English language.

1. Introduction
There is a growing concern about attitude of students to learning today globally (Asia, 2001). Whereas major developmental exploits and inventions of the past were birthed as a result of conscientious and dedicated attitude to learning, the trend today seemed to have been slowed down and the pace of development greatly reduced because of lukewarm and negative attitude to learning. Ingwu (2003) states that meaningful development in all the spheres of man's life is as a result of education which represents the concept of deliberate learning. Learning is generally viewed as the process through which knowledge is acquired. It is relatively permanent and persistent change that result from mental processes acting on experiences and interactions of the person and the environment that makes possible observable changes in behavior. This problem might be attributed to self-esteem of students as some students placed more or less value on themselves which may in turn influence their academic success. Academic attainment is an important parameter in measuring success in students. Observation and research reports have shown that success or high academic achievement has become a herculean task to achieve by students in recent times. Poor academic performance were recorded both at secondary and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria, Essien (2012). This poor performance of students at all levels in educational institutions in Nigeria has attracted much criticism from time immemorial. Soyinka (2012) Observed the decline in the academic performance of students in post primary schools and maintain that secondary school system academic standards had fallen drastically and the quality of secondary school graduates being produced is questionable and subject to re-examination.

There are different approaches to defining the concept of academic success. Perhaps the most certain way a student can define this concept is being able to meet an institution's expectations. This may include being in a better standing and making all the satisfactory progress towards earning their credentials. Beyond that, academic success may also include the students themselves. As a student, you also need to identify your own success goals while in school and work towards achieving them. Once the goals are successfully achieved, one can claim to have achieved academic success.

Students look at academic success differently. There are those that define academic success as being able to earn a specific grade point average, others are of the opinion that it entails landing a successful career while others define this as being able to gain admission to a particular graduate program. Depending on how you look at it these different thoughts can be used as an academic success definition without having to disregard any. Whichever way you look at it, academic success should be looked like a total transformative experience. An individual's education must not be limited to improving test results but should be encompassing. The challenge that remains is to create these transformations. It is the duty of our institutions to assume responsibility for the holistic development of a student. As parents, guardians, siblings, counselors, church and family; we can also play a part in the transformation, but our schools are considered as the Vanguard of all of these, Wikipedia (2009).

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Academic success is a major issue among students, teachers, parent, school counselors, administrators and the community at large. Attempts have been made by researchers to unravel the complexities surrounding academic success. Psychologists and counselors have put forward a lot of reasons why these disparities in performance exist. A lot of attention had been paid to external factors such as type of schools, teaching methods, school location, instructional materials, teachers' experience, and so on WAEC (2005). Many spend lots of money in order to secure good schools either for their children or themselves and those who can afford it even invest on education abroad as they believe this will enhance performance and which in turn gives an added advantage in terms of securing gainful employment.

Opinions vary as to why students excel academically while others appear to be underachievers or failures. Many educational counselors have consistently attempted to identify the major predictors of individual academic success. Factors such as intelligence, self-concept, gender, study habit, maturation, and home background, amongst others have been extensively explored as being responsible for academic success, especially among secondary school students. Other factors that have been researched into in the past include: child rearing patterns, peer group influence, socio-economic background and learning environment.

Maybe another major factor that is believed to be responsible for academic success is self-esteem. As self-esteem is confidence in one's own worth or abilities: self-esteem can be referred to as person's global judgments of competency regarding one's self-worth (Harter, 2008). This construct emerges when students compare their self-evaluation with actual performance on a variety of tasks. Moreover, this comparison between the perceived self and the ideal self is very crucial especially during adolescence as they encounter with diversified job of developing and challenges of their own age. Self-esteem is considered as one of the most important developmental processes of adolescence (Sirin and Rogers-Sirin, 2004) pointed out that one of the compliment necessary to achieve a true rise in self-esteem is successful performance in a learning task.

The Guardian Newspaper (2015) quoted the World Bank sponsored study that, Nigeria graduates are poorly trained and unproductive on job. Graduates skills have steadily deteriorated over the past decade.

Sirin and Rogers-Sirin (2004) also reported that the poor performance of Nigeria graduate particularly evident in two areas, poor mastery of Basic Studies (English language and Mathematics) and lack of requisite technical skills, it was ascertained in the report that the deficiencies in both vital areas make Nigeria graduates of the past fifteen years unfit for the labor market, and sometimes the larger society shortcoming were particularly observed in calculations, oral and written communication and applied technical skills.

The study also indicated that a serious disconnection exists between universities trainings and the needs of the labor market and this has been socially costly to the country. The report showed that in many cases employers of labor compensate for deficiency in academic preparation by organizing remedial course for new employees at great expenses. This often increase the company's operating cost and reduce profitability. Through the study many have identified major areas of the decline in the University education, the actual problem may have its root at the secondary school level. For it is at the secondary school level that the potential undergraduates are given inadequate foundation in the use of English Language and Mathematics. A majority of authentic and spoken language is rightly desirable, yet its teaching and learning is beset by a myriad of problems at the secondary school level.

Arithmetic and English Language is the vehicle of social interaction and requires practical everyday skillful use to function properly in the work place, social interaction, mobilization and indeed for functional literacy. It must be emphasized that "a person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enables him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in the culture of his group". In the analysis of the senior secondary school certificate result in English Language between 2015 and 2016, it was indicated that percentage of failure was between 53.36% and 72.31%.

Results released by the West African Examination Council (WAEC 2015 - 2016) left many students and their parents in tears, as 1,176,551 out of 1,705,976 candidates that sat for the exams fell below the minimum requirement for admission into the university. Details of the result indicated that only 529,425 candidates (31.28%) out of the 1.7 million candidates who wrote the exam obtained credits in five subjects and above in Mathematics and English Language. These were the successful ones qualified to apply for admission into tertiary institutions.

Aside the poor result recorded in this year's WASSCE, previous performances of candidates have never been cheering, for instance, in the Nov/Dec. 2012 – 2013 WASSCE, 150,615 (37.97%) out of 413,266 candidates obtained five credits, in Mathematics and English Language. In 2014 Nov/Dec. WASSCE only 86,612 candidates, representing 29.17% passed the examination with five credits, in Mathematics and English Language. Also, in May/June 2010 WASSCE, only 337,071 candidates out of 1,351,843 candidates passed with five credits including the two core subjects.

The release of the May/June 2014 WASSCE provoked more concern on the declining performances of Nigerian students over the years. Although, WAEC management pointed accusing fingers at parents, other stakeholders thought otherwise, as they blamed the government, teachers and parents alike for the mass failure, with the poor performances of students in Mathematics and English Language in Nigeria, educators, parents, employees, counselors are worried and express great concern. The problem therefore is to investigate the influence of self-esteem on students' academic performance in Mathematics and English Language examination. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the influence of self-esteem on academic success of secondary school students in Calabar metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria.

2. Problem of Study

Academic success is a major issue among educated stakeholders. Attempts have been made by researchers to unravel the complexities surrounding academic success, psychologists and counselors have forwarded reasons why those disparities in performance exist. Attention has been paid to external factors such as type of schools, teaching methods, school location, instructional materials, teachers experience and so on WAEC (2005). As stated that many people spend lots of money in order to secure good schools for their children or themselves which in turn gives an added advantage in terms of securing gainful employment.

Opinions vary as to why some students excel academically while others appear to be underachievers or failures. Educational counselors have consistently attempted to identify the major predictors of individual academic success.

Factors such as intelligence, self-concept, gender, study habit, maturation, home background, among others have been extensively explored as being responsible for academic success, especially among secondary school students. Other factors that have been researched into in the past include; child rearing pattern, peer group influence, socio-economic background and learning environment.

Another major factor that is believed to be responsible for academic success is self-esteem, hence, this study is positioned to investigate "how does self-esteem significantly influence academic success"?

3. Literature Review

Self-esteem can be referred to as a person's global judgment of competency regarding one's self-worth (Harter, 2008). In general, positive self-esteem helps individuals to view themselves as active and capable persons to promote change through efforts and set higher goals which cause learning new things. Numerous researchers have demonstrated that the best way to improve students' success is to increase their self-esteem (Rubie *et al.*, 2004). Research has also documented that high self-esteem plays an important role in academic achievement, social and personal responsibility (Tella, 2007). Those who have higher academic achievement tend to feel more confident in contrast those who lack confidence in themselves achieve less.

Self-esteem, which is commonly defined as the individual's positive or negative attitude towards the self as a totality (Valentine *et al.*, 2004) has been demonstrated in many studies to positively associate with various social and academic related factors. Rose and Broh (2000) have found in an analysis of data from the National Educational Longitudinal study in the United States that a sense of personal control affects subsequent academic achievement but self-esteem does not. Furthermore, personal control has also been found to be related to self-efficacy which has shown to require a certain level of positive self-evaluations to maintain self-efficacy (Pajares, 2006; Schunk, 2005). However, while self-efficacy and self-esteem are often found to be related, the increasing evidence revealing the positive effect from student self-efficiency for academic success does not likewise demonstrate a direct positive self-esteem has been viewed as a desirable attribute for students and therefore studies investigating self-esteem often note the important influence therein (Garcia-Reid *et al.*, 2005). Likewise, other research with this present study's sample of North American and British students has revealed that the most significant influence these schools have on students' attitude toward school are their peers and teachers (Booth and Shechan, 2008). Nonetheless, the direct influence that self-esteem has on academic performance remains unclear, with further longitudinal research needed to assist with understanding the relationship.

4. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the Ex-Post Facto. Subjects of this study consisted of 345 respondents comprising 180 boys and 165 girls. The instrument used for data collection was the Self-Esteem and Academic Success Questionnaire (SEASQ) and Achievement Test in Mathematics and English Language (ATMEL) developed by the researchers. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A sought information on self-esteem variable on 4 point Likert format on a continuum ranging from strongly Agree to strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated by three experts from departments of Test and Measurements, psychology and Guidance and Counseling. The reliability of the instrument yielding 0.78 which was considered adequate for the administration of the instrument.

The administration and collection of the instrument was carried out by the researchers with four research assistants. In all, a total of 345 copies of questionnaire were retrieved. The statistical tool employed for this study was independent t-test analysis of variance at 0.05 significant levels.

Table-1. Scoring Techniques for the Study

Positive Worded Items	Negative Worded Items
SA – 4 points	SD – 4 points
A – 3 points	D – 3 points
D – 2 points	A – 2 points
SD – 1 point	SA – 1 point

5. Result

This section presents the result of data analysis in accordance with the hypotheses:

The study was carried out to examine the influence of self-esteem on students' academic success among secondary school student in Calabar Metropolis. Data for the variables were collected and measured both

continuously and categorically with the use of a 4 point Likert scale ranging from strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The summary of the descriptive statistics are presented in table 2.

Table-2. Means and Standard Deviation of Research Variables

Self-Esteem	N	X	SD
Positive	221	23.05	8.25
Negative	124	19.87	5.01
Total	345	20.35	8.21

This section outlines the hypotheses that were tested respectively. Each of the hypothesis is restated and the analysis were appropriately carried and interpreted as thus.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of self-esteem on students' academic success in mathematics. The hypothesis was tested using independent t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 3.

Table-3. Summary of Independent t-test Analysis of the Influence of Self-esteem on Student's Academic Success in Mathematics. N = 345.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-cal
Positive	221	23.05	8.25	
				4.45
Negative	124	19.87	5.01	

P<0.05, df = 248; critical t = 1.96

From table 3 above, it shows that the total number of respondent with positive self-esteem is 221 with a mean X of 23.05 and a standard deviation SD of 8.25. similarly, the total number of respondents with negative self-esteem is 124 with the mean X of 19.87 and a corresponding standard deviation of 5.01 with 248 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated t-value is 4.45 while the critical t-value is 1.96. This result implies that since the calculated t-value of 4.45 was found to be greater than critical t-value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is significant influence of self-esteem on students' academic success in mathematics.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant influence of self-esteem on student's academic success in English Language. The hypothesis was tested using independent t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 4.

Table-4. Summary of Independent t-test Analysis of the Influence on Students' Academic Success in English Language N = 345

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-cal
Positive	221	41.11	10.92	
				11.56
Negative	124	28.38	9.13	

P<0.5, df = 248; critical t = 1.96

It could be seen on table 4 that the mean and standard deviation in the academic success of students' in English Language for positive self-esteem is 41.11 and 10.92 respectively, while that of negative is 28.38 and 9.13 respectively. With 248 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance and t-test calculated value of 11.56 hence the null hypothesis is rejected since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value at 0.05 alpha. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is upheld. Therefore, there is a significant influence of self-esteem on students' academic success in English Language.

6. Discussion

The result obtained from the analysis of the first and second hypotheses revealed that there exists significance of self-esteem on students' academic success in Mathematics and English Language respectively. The findings is in line with the findings of Rubie *et al.* (2004). As they revealed that positive self-esteem helps individuals to promote change through efforts as set higher goals which cause learning new things. Tella (2007) studies revealed that those who have higher academic achievement tend to feel more confident in contrast those who lack confidence in themselves achieve less.

Self-esteem, which is commonly defined as the individuals positive or negative attitude toward the self as a totality (Valentine *et al.*, 2004) has been demonstrated in many studies to positively associate with various social and academic related factors (Pajares, 2006; Schunk, 2005) stated that while self-efficacy and self-esteem are often found to be related, the increasing evidence revealing the positive effect from student self-efficacy for academic success does not likewise demonstrate a direct positive influence from self-esteem on school achievement. Nonetheless, a positive self-esteem has been viewed as a desirable attribute for students and therefore studies investigating self-esteem often note the important influence therein.

6.1. Counseling Implications of Students' Self-Esteem

1. Counselors should embark on effective counseling as to boost students' self-esteem as it is an important factor that strengthens the prediction of academic success in Mathematics and English Language.
2. Counselor should encourage parents to provide warmth and affection in their home so that their children will have a sense of belonging and self-confidence which will help develop their self-esteem; this can be carried out through community counseling.
3. Students need to be trained on how to improve significantly their state of self-esteem and academic efficacy.

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