SELF-CONCEPT AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ECONOMICS

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Abstract

This study investigated Students Self Concept as it could predict the Students' Performance in Economics. The study focused on determining the level of the Students' Self Concept and their performance in economics and see how Self-Concept could dictate the student's performance. The descriptive research of the survey design was engaged in the study, with a population of 12,833 of Senior Public Secondary School Students offering Economics in 2019/2020 academic session in Ekiti state, from which a total of 1200 (694 girls and 506 boys) Senior Secondary School students offering Economics were selected via multi stage sampling techniques. The instruments used for the study were the Students' Self-concept Questionnaire (SSCQ) and Economics Achievement Test (EAT). These instruments were subjected to face and content validity while a reliability coefficient value of 0.63 and 0.74 was obtained for the instruments respectively. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, meanwhile it was established that the students has a good and recommendable Self Concept, though with fair performance in Economics. A moderate predictive and positive strength was established considering the influence of the Students Self-Concept on their performance. While the female students were discovered to possess a higher level of Self-Concept than their male counterpart. It was however recommended that Teachers should verify the students' personal concept on learning Economics and make them see reasons to develop a positive concept about the three areas of the subject (Economics Theory, Mathematics and Statistics) with much focus on the male students.

Keywords: Self-Concept, Performance, Academic

INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. Education is important for personal, social and economic development of a nation, to live happily in prosperity. Economics is one of the foundational subjects which act as a basic necessity for understanding developmental processes, it involves the analysis of social relations, decision making and managerial effectiveness.

Economics according to C.E Ande is defined as a Social Science that studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means, which has alternative uses. According to Adu in Yusuf (2009), the study of economics serves a useful purpose in modern day life. It gives us facts about what may be expected to be the outcome of certain aspect of behavior; it helps us to decide which among several alternatives to choose from. It helps to make wise choice that will satisfy human needs in the presence of unlimited wants and resources.

Knowledge of Economics improves an individual's understanding of his daily living, especially on the basic necessities which are food, shelter, clothing, transportation, work and relaxation among others. Students have also benefited from studying economics in that it helps them to arrange their educational needs in order of priority, managing resources, understanding the management of the Nation's resources, budgeting in terms of revenue from(home and foreign trade), and expenditure for capital and recurrent projects, sources of taxes, its importance and uses, imports and exports and so on, but it is unfortunate that this objectives have not been achieved and the expectation of the government for introducing the subject (Economics) into secondary education has been cut short.

Self-concept is an individuals'/personal knowledge of self, encompassing all of one's thoughts and feelings about oneself- physically, mentally, and socially. Self-concept according to Hamachek and Marchargo in Sangeeta and Sumitra (2012), is the set of perceptions or reference points that the student has about himself; the set of characteristics, attributes, qualities and deficiencies, capacities and limits, values and relationships that the student knows to be descriptive of himself and which he perceives as data concerning his identity. It is the set of knowledge and attitudes that one has about himself; the perceptions that the individual assigns to himself and characteristics or attributes that he uses to describe himself. 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 according to Clemes and Bean in Ajayi, Lawani and Adeyanju (2011) 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. Self-concept, as a component of human personality development, has its own nature and peculiarity. Several authors 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.

Academic performance is examined by measuring the students' achievement across various academic subjects. Teacher and education officials typically measure achievement using classroom performance, graduation rates and results from standardized tests. Earlier research has focused to explore the factors that are related to academic performance. Students' academic performance and graduation rates have been the area of interest for higher education institutions. Investigation of factors related to academic performance of students has become a topic of growing interest in higher educational circle.

Hanson in Erum (2011) reported that students' performance is affected by other factors such as learning abilities, gender and race, but the research is interested in predicting Students' academic performance using Self- concept and Study habit. Simons in Erum (2011) concluded that family income level, attending full time, receiving grant aid and completing advanced level classes in high school having statistically significant effects on college persistence among First Generation College.

Despite the fact that Nigeria to a large extent had embraced western education and it has almost become a taboo for anyone not to send his or her child to school coupled with the fact that many parents are now to some extent literate, yet observation and experience has shown that many of the students this day still find it difficult to excel academically. Some students at certification examinations are still found wanting while some parents had subscribed to registering their students in miracle centers or do the untold to support or aid examination malpractice.

Some students seem to have no confidence in themselves when it comes to their academic ability or level of performance; meanwhile everyone is endowed by God. Many students are of bad fate when it comes to their chance of making it academically, they strongly belief that some of their colleagues are of better lot and specially endowed to make it academically. This at times brings about the belief in the use of words like genius, guru, magnetic brain among others. Even when the set of students in this category are been encouraged to buckle up and strive for excellence, but their belief and perception kept on dragging them, hence limiting their chance of making it academically. The aftermath effect of this wrong and bad impression about themselves at times has to do with some subjects in particular, most especially, subjects that has to do with calculations such as mathematics, physics and Economics which they most considered to be abstract in nature. Following their wrong impression, many of them do now find themselves been discouraged to attend classes of such subjects, attend tests and assignment talk less of self-practices or studying and their performance continues to be badly affected.

Students with bad impression about themselves are very much likely to be relegated to poor performance and subject themselves to examination malpractices, which educational stakeholders strives to curb. Economics as a subject has to do with theory, statistics and mathematics, and this had become a serious problem for many students, leaving them with repeated poor performance in the subject. Despite the importance of Economics to individuals and the society at large, many students do all to avoid studying the subject even now that the subject had been made an option in the secondary curriculum in Nigeria while the treat the avoidance of the subject to the individual family and the country at large remains inevitable.

The belief or perception of the students about each subject and their ability to create an enabling environment and strategy for reading therefore pose a question as to why many students do perform poorly in different subjects, most especially in a subject like Economics which has different aspects (the theoretical, mathematical and graphical representation), that calls for optimum seriousness and attentiveness for a better performance. Hence, this study examined the extent to which self-concept can predict academic performance of students in Economics.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study was to find out the predictive strength of self- concept on academic performance of students. Specifically, the study intended to:
   i.   examine the level of Students' Self Concept
   ii.   establish the level of Students' Performance in Economics
   iii. investigate the predictive strength of Students' Self Concept on their Academic Performance
   iv.   examine the difference in Students' Self Concept by gender

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of the Economics Students' self-concept?
2. What is the level of the Students' Academic performance in Economics?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Self-concept will not significantly predict academic performance of students in Economics
2. There will be no significant difference between male and female students' self-concept.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Prediction

Studies on prediction purposes are vast in literature. In some studies, the emphasis was on the extent to which a criterion behavior pattern could be predicted, Becastro as cited in Omirin and Ayesimoju (2017). In some studies, as well, the emphasis was on test development in which the test developer seek to test the predictive validity of their newly developed test items, Thorndike as cited in (Omirin and Ayesimoju, 2017).

However, one type of prediction that has gained much prominence in educational circle is the use of scores derived from standardized tests to predict success or performance in a particular course of study Geisenr & Study, as cited in Omirin and Ayesimoju (2017). Accumulated evidence from the latter's studies shows that best tests that are good predictors are applied to practical problems such as selection of candidates for college admission or provision of scientific basis for the school counselors in helping the students to plan their academic future. Self-concept and Study habits' predictive power on students' academic performance will therefore be an important basis for counselor to advice and moderate students' acts and attitudes in area of learning.

Self-Concept and Academic Performance

Although there is agreement about the relationship between academic self- concept and academic performance, the causal ordering of these constructs has some differences in researchers' opinion. There are three distinct models regarding the causal ordering between self-concept and academic achievement. They are the self- enhancement model, the skill development model and the reciprocal-effects model. Green as cited in Naseebah (2015), investigated the relationship between both academic motivation and academic self-concept on 4,000 high school students to determine their combined effects on the students' academic achievement. This longitudinal study found that "improved academic self-concepts and motivation will lead to better academic achievement, and improved achievement will lead to better academic self- concept and academic motivation. Helmke, and van Aken in Naseebah (2015) investigated, through a longitudinal study, the causal ordering of self-concept and academic achievement in 697 elementary students. Achievement was assessed by using grades or test performance. These were compared to see if they made a difference in causal ordering between self-concept and academic achievement. The results showed that there was a reciprocal, causal relationship between students' self-concept and academic achievement, "implying that self-concept in elementary school serves both as cause and as effect. The development of self-concept starts from birth. This is first evidenced through the emotional attachment of the child and the mother. The quality of interactions may contribute to or weaken

the self-concept of the child. Students' positive perception is helpful in achieving success throughout life, while the success in children's lives depends not only on cognitive ability, but also on emotional skills (Gliebe, 2012). According to Tabone in Naseebah (2015), "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 et al. (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. Zeleke in Naseebah (2015) compared two types of self-concept for learning of disabled students: social (general) and academic. Social self-concept includes a more global understanding of the child, in terms of popularity, appearance, etc. Academic self-concept is related to how the student perceives himself or herself as a learner. The researcher believed that social self-concept was less understood as a factor to academic achievement than academic self-concept was.

The concept of performance is general to all fields of human endeavor. Man's potential is related to his actual performance through learning and motivation, although other tasks and variables are also determinants of performance level. Cooper & Burgar (2010) defined academic performance as a quality of performance in terms of tasks and class exercises with academic content. It is a level of a given standard content and excellence; a qualified academic achievement. Several research studies have examined the relationship between students" self-concept and their academic achievement. Although many of these studies have reported a significant correlation between these two variables (Aboh, cited in Ajunwo 2018), others failed to find any substantial or significant relationship between students" self-concept and their academic achievement rather, they found that self-concept can be used as a predictor of academic achievement. However, more studies have shown that self-concept may be a prominent factor influencing academic achievement of students. Hence, children who have negative or poor self-concept generally have been found to have more social behaviour problems and tend to be more delinquent than those who have high self- concept. Similarly, research studies have shown that high self-concept is significantly associated with good academic achievements while lower or negative self-concept correlates very low with good academic achievements. Nwezeh in Ajunwo (2018), carried out a research on children aged 4 to 5 years old and found that some children who were made to feel inferior to other children declined in confidence and they did not attend as efficiently as other children who have not been subjected to their negative feedbacks. Noad in Ajunwo (2018) explored the relationship among self-concept, educational attitude and performance of 51 elementary school teachers at the final phase of their undergraduate professional teacher preparation programme. The students completed the Minneseta Teacher Attitude Inventory, the self-description instrument and the professional teacher preparation programme success questionnaire. The results of the study indicated that self-concept and educational attitude operating jointly contributed 40.32% of the variance in student teacher's performance; 11% of the variance was explained by educational attitude while 25% was accounted for by self-concept. This result reveals that self-concept, more than educational attitude has more influence on the students' performance. In their study on self-concept, study behaviour and cognitive performance of 6th grade boys in relation to their feelings of intellectual achievement. Panda & Panda in Ajunwo (2018) found out that self-concept and study behaviour were positively related to achievement. They administered several measurement scales which include: The way I

feel about myself scale", and "The Study Habit Inventory". The results obtained were compared with the students" academic performance as measured by final examination result grades.

Parlikar (1972) reported that self-concept correlates positively with personal social and overall adjustment but negatively with Performance in Psychology. In a research carried out by Olatoye, (2009) on Study Habit, Self-Concept and Science Achievement of Public and Private Junior Secondary School Students in Ogun State, Nigeria, it was revealed that Self-concept has a greater impact on student science achievement. Also, in an investigation carried out on Self-concept and performance of secondary school students in mathematics. He posited that self-concept is moderately related to performance in Mathematics and that gender had no influence on self-concept towards Mathematics and performance in Mathematics.

John, Abdul and Emma (2014) investigated on the influence of Students' Self-concept on their academic performance in the Elimna township, Ghana. A sample of 297students were randomly selected in the Junior high School (those who completed the questionnaire that has 40 closed-ended items related to Students' Self-concept construct which they derived from the literature reviewed.

The average scores of the second term test- scores in Mathematics, Integrated Science, English Language and Social Studies were used to measure Students' academic performance. Their findings showed that Self-concept of Students influence academic performance in Schools, indirectly through Students' effort in learning.

Madhvi and Teotia (2015) carried out a study on Academic achievement and Self-concepts of Secondary level Students. They made use of a total of 400 secondary class students as for the study, where 200 boys and 200 girls of class 1xth from various government or and private schools in East Delhi and North-East Delhi within the age range of 15-16 years, from urban and rural areas were as sample in the academic session of 2011/2012. They found out in the study that there was no significant difference in the Self-concept of the Secondary level students in gender and management variation but urban students have better Self-concept than rural students.

Oluwatayo (2011) carried out an investigation on self-concept and performance of secondary school students in Mathematics. The research adopted a survey design in order to describe the extent of relationship between Students' Self-concept towards Mathematics and their performance in Mathematics as well as the influence of gender on Self-concept and performance in Mathematics. The sample for the study consisted of 320 senior secondary school one (sss1) students (male=100, female=160). The findings showed that self-concept moderately related to performance in Mathematics and that gender had no influence on self-concept towards Mathematics and performance in Mathematics.

Ghazvini (2011) carried out a research on the relationship between academic self-concept and academic performance in high school students. A total number of 363 students were sampled in the study. 176 students were male and 187 were female and their age ranged from 15 to 18 years with an average age of 16.4. (S.D=42). He made use of self-concept Questionnaire of Rajkumar Saraswat as an instrument for data collection. He concluded that students' self-concept is a valid predictor of academic performance.

Ajunwo (2018) investigated the self-concept and academic achievement of undergraduate Business education students in River State. The population for the study was 536 final year Business Education students for 2015/2016 session (Rivers State University) and (Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Portharcourt, Rivers State). A simple random sampling procedure was used to select 214 Business Education students for the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The instruments for data collection were students' academic record and a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire. It was concluded in the study that self-concept enhances students' academic achievement in Rivers State Institutions.

Ajayi, Lawani and Adeyanju (2011) conducted a research on Effects of students' Attitude and self-concept on Achievement in Senior Secondary School Mathematics in Ogun State, Nigeria. Instruments used for data collection were: Attitude towards Mathematics Questionnaire (ATMQ), Self-Concept Scale (SCS) and Students' Mathematics Achievement Test (SMAT). The finding of the study showed that Attitude to Mathematics and self-concept have a significant joint effect on Mathematics achievement.

METHODOLOGY
Research Design
This study employed descriptive research of the survey design. The survey design is the type in which every segment of the population for the study is well represented. Hence, the study investigated the predictive strength of Students' Self Concept on their Academic Performance in Economics.

Population and Sample
The population for this study consisted of 12,833 of Senior Public Secondary School Students offering Economics in 2019/2020 academic session as obtained from the Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Ekiti State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ado Ekiti. While the sample was made up of 1200 (694 girls and 506 boys) Senior Secondary School students offering Economics in 2019/2020 session, as selected through multi-stage sampling procedure.

Research Instrument
The two instruments used in this study were the Students' Self-concept Questionnaire (SSCQ) and Economics Achievement Test (EAT). The instruments were subjected to face and content validity while a reliability coefficient value of 0.63 and 0.74 was obtained for the instruments respectively.

Data Analysis
Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions were answered using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean and percentages while Research hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics.
Hypothesis 1 was tested using Regression Analysis, while hypothesis 2 was tested using t-test. all hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS
Research Question 1
What is the level of the Economics Students' Self-Concept?

To answer this question, the descriptive statistics of the level of the students' Self –Concept was used. 20 items were constructed on Students' Self- Concept and was rated on four (4) four point scale (likert). This means that the highest score any student could get on the Self Concept instrument is 20*4=80 while the lowest score a student can get will be 1*20=20. This forms the level of their Self Concept as it was categorized into High (61-80), Moderate (41-60), Low (21-40) and Very Low (0-20) as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the level of students' Self -Concept

Level of Students' Self-Concept	Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	61-80	342	29
Moderate	41-60	611	51
Low	21-40	165	14
Very Low	0-20	82	6
Total		**1200**	**100**

The above table reveals the level of students' Self-Concept about Economics. The table showed that the level of student's self-concept is high at 29% and moderate at 51%. This implies that the students have a reasonable Self-Concept about the subject Economics. 20% of the students have a low self-concept about the subject, which implies that the students are self-motivated considering their perception about the subject economics probably because of their interest in the subject.

Research Question 2

What is the level of the Students' academic performance in Economics?

To answer this question, the descriptive statistics of the level of the students' academic performance in Economics was used. 40 Economics Achievement Test items were constructed with each item carrying one (1) mark each. Any student who gets all the items correctly will get 40 marks while Students who get all the items wrongly will get 0 marks in total. The Students' performance is hereby categorized into Good (30-40), Average (15-40), poor (0-14) as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the level of students' Academic performance in Economics.

Level of Students' Academic Performance in Economics	Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Good	30-40	21	2
Average	15-29	824	68
Poor	0-14	355	30
Total		**1200**	**100**

The table 2 above presents the level of the performance of students in Economics. The table showed that the performance of the students in economics is on average with a larger percentage falling in the range (68%), some of them were found to be of poor performance at (30%), while very few of them barely made the excellent cadre at (2%). This implies that students' performance can only be considered to be fair as revealed through the table above. This may be as a result of the fact that Economics as a subject is made up of three different aspects, which are: mathematical, theoretical

and statistical aspect. Students who are poor in mathematics will therefore find it difficult to preform excellently well in the subject compared to those who are good in all the aspects.

Hypothesis 1

Self-concept will not significantly predict academic performance of students in Economics

Regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis and the result was presented in the table below.

Table 3: Regression analysis of the predictive strength of Self-Concept on Students' Academic Performance in Economics.

Variation	Constant	B	R^2	Sig.
Students' Self Concept	15.521	0.608	0.35	0.004

The table above presents the analysis of the predictive strength of Self-Concept on the Students' academic performance. The table revealed that the Self-Concept of the students significantly and moderately predict their academic performance in Economics at β (0.608) and Sig. (0.004) which is less than 0.005. The R^2 at (0.35) revealed that Students' Self-Concept only accounted for 35% variation in the students' academic performance. This indicated that the remaining 65% can be traced to other factors.

$Y = a + bX$

Where Y is dependent variable (Students' Academic Performance)

a is the constant

b is the beta weight of the independent variable

X is the independent variable (Self-Concept)

$Y = a + b$ (Self-Concept)

$Y = 15.521 + 0.608X$

Hypothesis 2

There will be no significant difference between male and female students' self-concept.

Independent t-test analysis was used to test this hypothesis and the result was presented in the table below.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis of the difference between the Self-Concept of male and female Economics students.

Variable (Students' Self Concept)	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.
Male	515	51.02	24.960			
Female	685	62.42	8.281	1198	3.267	0.001

The table 4 above presents the analysis of the difference in the level of self-concept of male and female Economics students. It was revealed that there exists a significant difference between the self-concept of the male and female Economics students. The table showed the details of the analysis as Male N (515), mean (51.02), SD (24.960), Female N (685), mean (62.42), SD (8.281) with df (1198), t (3.267) and sig. (0.001). The figures however, showed that the self-concept of the students differs by gender at 0.001 < 0.05. This implies that both the male and female Economics

students are of different level of self-concept with the female ones having a higher level of self-concept than their male counterpart.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the predictive strength of the students' self-concept on their academic performance in economics. The study investigated the level of the students' self-concept about the subject economics. It was found out that the students have a high and recommendable level of self-concept considering economics as subject. This could be as a result of their level of maturity which could guide their decision and enable them to reflect more on the concept of the subject compared to their junior counterpart.

The students' performance in economics was also considered in the study. Meanwhile, it was discovered that the students had a fair/moderate performance in the subject. This could be traced to the segments in the subject which involved mathematics, statistics and economic theory, of which some of the segment like mathematics might appear to be difficult for the students to understand and this may result to a setback.

The study examined the impact of students' self-concept on their academic performance. The result of the study revealed that, self-concept does significantly and positively predict the students' academic performance in Economics. This can also be traced to their high level of self-concept which will definitely give them a clear concept and understanding of the terms and terminology of the subject and therefore influence their performance positively.

This is in line with the submission of John, Abdul and Emma (2014) and Ajayi, Lawani, Adeyanju (2011) and Ajunwo (2018) that self-concept does significantly influence and affect students' academic performance. The outcome is also in agreement with the study of Ghazvini (2011) where he submitted that self-concept does significantly predict students' academic performance.

This study examined the difference in the level of students' self-concept by gender. It was discovered that there exists a significant difference in the level of the self-concept of male and female students. This is in disagreement with the findings of Madhvi and Teotia (2015) who submitted in their study that there exists no significant difference in the level of self-concept of male and female students and also in contrary with findings of Oluwatayo (2011) who submitted that gender has no significant influence on the level of students' self-concept.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from this study, it was concluded that the students have a good self-concept about Economics as a subject, while the students' performance were found to be on average, and that students' academic performance in economics has to do with their level of self-concept to some extent. While the female students were found to be of higher level of self-concept compared to their male counterparts.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- ➢ School teachers and counselors should encourage the students to improve on their belief and level of self-concept about Economics and other subjects.
- ➢ Teachers should verify the students' personal concept on learning economics and make them see reasons to develop a positive concept about the three areas of economics (Economics Theory, Mathematics and Statistics) with much focus on the male students.

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