

Self-Esteem and Academic Performance among Undergraduate Students in the University of Maiduguri: Implication for Counseling

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Abstract

The study determined relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among undergraduate students in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. Three objectives were stated and three null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance in the study. Correlation design was employed for the study. The target population comprised all the undergraduate students in Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, which was 3,231 undergraduate students and based on the recommendation of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) with regard to the determination of sample size from a given population, samples of 360 undergraduate students were drawn through random sampling technique. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg (1965) and Grade Point Average were used for data collection. Pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in the study area, data collected was computed using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient, and reliability coefficient of .87 was found which shows that the instrument was reliable for the purpose of this study. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to test hypothesis one and t-test of independent samples were used to test hypotheses two and three. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among undergraduate students. It is further discovered that there was no significant difference between self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students. Furthermore, the study also showed that there was significant difference between Grade Point Average of male and female undergraduate students in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri in favour of females. Based on findings of the study the researchers concluded that high level of self-esteem leads to good academic performance. It was recommended that counselors should work towards improving the self-esteem of students in schools at all levels of education.

Keywords: *Self-esteem, Academic performance, Counseling*

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Background to the Study

It is generally believed that there are many benefits to having a positive view of the self. Those who have high self-esteem are presumed to be psychologically happy and healthy, whereas those with low self-esteem are believed to be psychologically distressed and perhaps even depressed. Wilson (2002) suggested that basic self-esteem is a standard by which a person judges him/herself, an estimate, a feeling, and an emotion, according to him, self evaluation is the single most significant key to behaviour, which affects ones thinking processes, emotions, desires, values, and goals. Self-esteem is literally defined by how much value people place on themselves and it is the evaluative component of self-knowledge. The evaluative aspect of the self-concept that corresponds to an overall view of the self as worthy or unworthy can be regarded as self-esteem. Thus, self-esteem is an attitude about the self and is related to personal beliefs about skills, abilities, social relationships, and future outcomes. Although self-esteem is related to the self-concept and the two terms are often used interchangeably but are different. Wells and Marwell (1976) refers self-concept as the totality of cognitive beliefs that people have about themselves; it is everything that is known about the self, and include things such as name, race, tribes, likes, dislikes, beliefs, values, and appearance descriptions, such as height and weight. By contrast, they refer self-esteem as the emotional response that people experience as they contemplate and evaluate different things about themselves. However, self-esteem appears to be shaped by self-concept.

Psychologically, self-esteem is a state of mind, it is the way people think and feel about themselves. Having high self-esteem means having feelings of confidence, worthiness and positive regard for oneself, people with high self-esteem feel good about themselves; they feel a sense of belonging and security, they respect themselves and appreciate others; they tend to be successful in life because they feel confident in taking on challenges and risking failure to achieve what they want. However, they have more energy for positive pursuits because their energy is not wasted on negative emotions. Rosenberg (1965) described self-esteem as a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the self. Harter (1990) defined self-esteem as how one likes, accepts, and respects oneself as a person. He asserted that there are two different theoretical views of self-esteem; namely, how a person perceived success with reference to the importance of success in that particular domain; and how a person perceives himself/herself which is originating from him/her own perceptions. Self-esteem is a positive or negative value based on one's own attributes. In a nutshell, self-esteem is how an individual feels about himself or herself.

Self-esteem is a large part of individuals' self-understanding and is likely to be a fluctuating and dynamic construct, susceptible to internal and external influences while growing and developing. Self-esteem is widely recognized as a central aspect of psychological functioning during adolescence and adulthood. Boys seem to score higher than girls on self-esteem during adolescence; one possible explanation for this difference is gender roles, many qualities associated with the male role are consistent with high self-esteem. In addition, self-confidence is a stereo typically masculine trait; boys are expected to develop self-confidence, whereas the presentation of self-confidence in girls is considered a breach of traditional gender roles.

Higher education is one of the main factors that facilitate individuals to achieve success in obtaining a profession in order to face different life challenges. University life can be challenging and difficult for new students' and even the old one, thus requiring a higher degree of student's initiative, determination, and self-monitoring. Schools like Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics have no worth without students; therefore, students are most essential asset for any educational institute. The social and economic development of the country is directly linked with student academic performance; thus, students' performance plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country, responsible for the country's economic and social development. Academic performance is regarded as participants examination grades (Grades Point Average) at the end of a particular period of school programmes. The academic performance of undergraduate students especially in the University of Maiduguri recently has become a source of concern for the educational stakeholders concerned. Kagu (2005) found poor study habit pattern to have resulted to low Grade Point Average (GPA) of diploma students in University of Maiduguri. Academic performance is generally used to determine how well an individual is able to assimilate, retain, recall and communicate his knowledge of what has been learnt. Adeniji (2007) identified factors responsible for poor academic performance of students such as dwindling teachers/lecturers commitment, inadequate resources or socio-economic status, psychological factors, sexual problems, study habit among others but low self-esteem may form the major cause. Adepoju (1999) suggest how socio-psychological variables such as self-esteem, test-anxiety, locus of control, romantic relationship, work load and task could foster academic performance among students. The study therefore determined whether there was relationship between self-esteem and academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Maiduguri.

Statement of the Problem

The socio-economic development of any nation is directly linked with student academic performance. The students' performance plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's social and economic development. Students' academic performance in higher education is affected by various psychological, socio-economic, environmental factors, and personal factors; it is always in the best interest of educators to measure students' academic performance, because it allows them to evaluate not only students' knowledge levels but also the effectiveness of their own teaching processes. The researchers has over the years observed that many undergraduate students hardly pass all their registered courses, majority of those who successfully do so have poor grades and low GPA, recently, the spillover students in departments in the University of Maiduguri are on increase. It is against this background that the study determines the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among undergraduate students in the University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to determine:

1. Relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri.
2. Difference in self-esteem among undergraduate students by gender in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri.

3. Difference in academic performance among undergraduate students by gender in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri.

Hypotheses

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant difference between self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri.
- Ho₃:** There is no significant difference between academic performance of male and female undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri.

Literature Review

Self-Esteem and Academic Performance

The relationship between self-esteem and academic performance has been well documented in the literature; Arshad, Zaidi and Mahmood (2015) determined the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among students in G.C. University Faisalabad, Pakistan. The study had three objectives and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at .01 level of significance. The target populations of the study comprised of all the undergraduate students in the G.C. University Faisalabad, sample of eighty students were selected through purposive sampling technique. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and Academic Performance Rating Scale (APRS) were used as an instrument for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and t-test of independent samples. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. Furthermore, a significant difference was found between male and female students on self-esteem and academic performance in favour of male and female respectively. Based on these findings the researchers concluded that high level of self-esteem leads to good academic performance.

Obochi (2011) conducted a study on relationships between self-esteem, causal attributions and academic achievement among secondary school students in Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory. One of the objectives of the study was to determine relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary school students in Bwari Area Council. Survey design was employed for the study. Sample of 191 participants were drawn (comprising 90 males and 101 females) using random sampling technique, from five secondary schools in Bwari Area Council, FCT. Academic Causal Attribution Scale and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Academic Achievement Proforma were used for data collection. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson product Moment Correlation to test relationships and Independent sample t-test to test differences between variables, at 0.01 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there was positive association between self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary school students in Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory. Based on the findings the researcher recommended that methods of building positive self-esteem be embraced by both parents and teachers.

Akinpelu (1998) investigated relationship between academic achievement and self-concept of male and female hearing-impaired students in Nigeria. The students who participated in this study were drawn from the population of hearing-impaired students in senior secondary (SSI, II, III) schools in Nigeria. The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique to draw her subjects because of their "special nature" - there are a limited number of hearing-impaired students in secondary schools. A total number of 566 (362 males, 204 females) students were identified and they all participated in the study. The students' Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSCE) scores in English Language and Mathematics were used to measure their academic achievement, (these scores were obtained from the schools' log books and were most often obtained from the counsellors). The Adolescent Personal Data Inventory (APDI) developed by Akinboye (1985) formed a ready tool for the measurement of the students' self-concept. The data collected were analysed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and t-test of independent samples. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of male and female hearing-impaired students in Nigeria. Furthermore, it also found that there was no significant difference between the academic achievement scores of both male and female hearing-impaired respondents, and that there was no significant difference between the self-concept scores of male and female hearing-impaired respondents. Based on the findings of the study the researcher concluded that the female respondents' slightly lower academic achievement was due to the lower self-concept since it has been established that self-concept has a relationship with academic achievement.

Aryana (2010) conducted a study on the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in the pre-university students in Qaemshahr, Iran. The objectives of the study were to determine relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement and to identify whether there are differences between boys and girls in both self-esteem and academic achievement. The target population for the study comprised all pre-university students in Qaemshahr; one hundred (50 male and 50 female) students were drawn through random sampling. Cooper smith questionnaire and the students' grade in their current were used as an instrument. The findings of the study showed that there was significant ($p < 0.01$) positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Moreover, there was significant difference in academic achievement between boys and girls. However, no significant difference was found in self-esteem between males and females. Based on the results it was suggested that high self-esteem is important factor and strengthen the prediction of academic achievement among students in all levels.

Priyadharshini and Relton (2014) investigated relationship between self-esteem and academic performance of freshmen at Karunya University. The findings of the study revealed that students with positive self-esteem have high academic performance. Hence, it is inferred from the result of this study that there is a significantly high relationship between self-esteem and academic achievements of students. Maropamabi (2014) reported that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance of the University of Botswana students.

Gender and Self-Esteem

Radhwan (2015) Assessed self-esteem among nursing students in College of Nursing, University of Mosul, Iraq. One of the objectives of the study was to determine gender difference between self-esteem among nursing students in the University of Mosul. Three hundred (300) nursing students were randomly drawn from the College of Nursing, which comprised (75%) males and (25%) females. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was used for data collection and the data collected was analyzed using t-test of independent samples. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant difference between the self-esteem of males and females nursing students in the University of Mosul, Iraq. The study also revealed that both males and females students showed high self-esteem. Arshad, Zaidi and Mahmood (2015) found a significant difference between male and female students on self-esteem among students in G.C. University Faisalabad, Pakistan, in favour of male.

Jain and Dixit (2014) determined the gender difference in the self-esteem levels of the youths in Indian. One of the objectives was to find out if there exist gender differences among Indian College students in their levels of self-esteem. Samples of one hundred and fifty (150) students were selected for the study, out of which 77 were females and 73 were males, all the respondents were within the age group of 18 to 23 years. Coopersmith Self esteem Inventory (1987) revised version developed by Stanley Coopersmith in 1975, was used for data collection, the data collected was analyzed using t-test of independent samples. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female College students in their levels of self-esteem. Based on the findings the researchers concluded that India girls have become more independent in their personal and career choices which are responsible for their rise in levels of self-esteem. Obochi (2011) found that there was no significant difference between the self-esteem of males and females among secondary school students in Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory.

Malik (2013) determined gender difference between self-esteem among undergraduate students in the University of Sargodha, Pakistan. Sample of 120 students (60 males and 60 females) was drawn from the various departments of university of Sargodha, all the respondents fall within the age range of 18-26 years. The samples were selected using purposive sampling technique. Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire developed by Rosenberg (1965) and Hills & Argyle (2001) respectively were used for data collection. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and t-test of independent samples. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant difference between the self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students in favour of male. Based on the findings the researcher concluded that the traditional gender and social roles in the patriarchal Pakistani society in which boys are given more importance and privileges as compared to girls could be responsible for the high self-esteem among the boys. Akinpelu (1998) reported that there was no significant difference between the self-concept scores of male and female hearing-impaired students in Nigeria. Aryana (2010) found that there was no significant ($p < 0.01$) difference between self-esteem of males and females pre-university students in Qaemshahr, Iran.

Gender and Academic Performance

Chinwuba and Osamuyimen (2011) determined difference between academic performance of male and female accounting undergraduate students in Nigeria. Based on the objective of the study, one (1) hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The researchers involved first year male and female accounting undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Nigeria, who sat for Introductory Financial Accounting courses namely, Introduction to Financial Accounting I & II in 2004/2005 to 2007/2008 academic session. Sample of seven hundred and eighty four (784) were drawn through random sampling technique. The University's grading system was adopted as an instrument for data collection for the study. The data collected was analyzed using t-test of independent samples. The finding of the study revealed that there was no significant difference between academic performance of male and female accounting students in undergraduate in the University of Benin, Nigeria. On the contrary, Arshad, Zaidi and Mahmood (2015) found a significant difference between male and female students academic performance among students in G.C. University Faisalabad, Pakistan, in favour of female. Akinpelu (1998) reported that there was no significant difference between the academic achievement scores of male and female hearing-impaired students in Nigeria. Aryana (2010) found that there was significant ($p < 0.01$) difference in academic achievement between boys and girls pre-university students in Qaemshahr, Iran. Abubakar (2010) also reported there was no significant gender difference in academic achievement (CGPA) of Mathematics and Science students.

Adigun, Onihunwa, Irunokhai, Sada and Adesina (2015) conducted a study on the effect of gender on students' academic performance in computer studies in secondary schools in New Bussa, Borgu Local Government Area of Niger State. One of the objectives of the study was to determine gender difference in the academic performance in computer science of students. The researchers adopted ex post facto research design for the study. The population target for the study was all senior secondary school students in class 3 (SS3), multistage stratified sampling technique was used to draw 275 students from both private and public schools in the study area. Questionnaire which consist of 30 multiple-choice items drawn from Senior School Certificate Examination past questions as set by the West Africa Examination Council in 2014 multiple choice past question was used as the research instrument. The data collected were analyzed using t-test of independent samples. The results of the study showed that even though the male students had slightly better performance compared to the female students, it was not significant. This better performance was found to be pronounced in the private school which was shown to possess the best male brains found in the study area. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made. Parents are encouraged to provide the right education they can afford for their children irrespective of gender. Also, there should be a deliberate Federal Government policy to encourage absorbance of female students into further study in computer science. Furthermore, it was recommended that stake holders in the education industry should make use of these findings and try to research into ways of making gender sensitive policies.

Methodology

The design of the study is correlation research design adopted to investigate relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among undergraduate students in the University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The target population for the study comprised

all the undergraduate students in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, which are three thousand two hundred and thirty one (3,231) undergraduate students. Sample size of 360 undergraduate students was selected based on the recommendation of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) with regard to the determination of sample size from a given population. The samples were drawn using random sampling techniques.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg (1965) and Grade Point Average were used for data collection. RSES contains two sections; Section A of the RSES contains items on demographic information of undergraduate students. The Section B contains of 10 items, it is related to the feelings of self acceptance and self worth, responses were measured on a 4-point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in the study area. The instrument were pilot tested with 40 diploma students in the University of Maiduguri, these students were not part of the population for the main study and Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .89 was obtained at $p < .05$, this shows that the instrument was reliable for the purpose of this study. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and t-test of independent samples were used for data analysis

Results

Table 1 indicated that there was a significant relationship between self-esteem (as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale) and academic performance (as measured by the Grade Point Average), it was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a very strong, positive correlation between the two variables [$r = .623$, $N = 360$, $P < .05$], with high levels of self-esteem associated with high levels of academic performance.

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation between Self-Esteem and Grade Point Average of Undergraduate Students

	Self-Esteem	N	P-Value	Remarks
Grade Point Average	.623	360	.05	S

Keys: S=Significant

Table 2: indicated that the Sig. (2-tailed) value is .60 is greater than .05, this implies that there was no significant difference between self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Therefore Hypothesis (H_0) which states that there is no significant difference between self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri was accepted.

Table 2: t-test of Independent Samples of Difference between Self-Esteem Scale of Male and Female Undergraduate Students

Self-Esteem	N	Mean	SD	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-Value	P-Value	Remarks
Male	222	27.15	6.29	358	.60	.52	.05	NS
Female	138	27.53	7.08					

Keys: NS= Not Significant

Table 3 indicated that the Sig. (2-tailed) value is .38 is less than .05, this implies that there was significant difference between Grade Point Average of male and female undergraduate students in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Therefore Hypothesis (H_{03}) which states that there is no significant difference between Grade Point Average of male and female undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri was rejected.

Table 3: t-test of Independent Samples of Difference between Grade Point Average of Male and Female Undergraduate Students

Grade Point Average	N	Mean	SD	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-Value	P-Value	Remarks
Male	222	3.01	.70	358	.38	.86	.05	S
Female	138	3.08	.71					

Keys: S=Significant

Discussion

The findings of the study with respect to the first hypothesis (H_{01}) which states that there is no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri. This shows that there was significant positive relationship self-esteem and academic performance among undergraduate students. The findings of this study seemed to be consistent with that of (Akinpelu, 1998; Aryana, 2010; Obochi, 2011; Priyadharshini and Relton, 2014 & Arshad, Zaidi and Mahmood, 2015) who reported that there was positive relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among students. On the contrary, Maropamabi (2014) reported that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance of the University of Botswana students.

The findings of this study with respect to the second hypothesis (H_{02}), which states that there is no significant difference between self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri; revealed that there was no significant difference between self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri. The finding of the study agrees with the findings of (Akinpelu, 1998; Aryana, 2010; Obochi, 2011; Jain and Dixit, 2014 & Radhwan, 2015) who found out that there was no significant difference between self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students. On the contrary, Malik (2013) and Arshad, Zaidi and Mahmood (2015) found that there was significant difference between self-esteem of male and female undergraduate students in favour of male.

The findings of this study with respect to the third hypothesis (H_{03}), which states that there is no significant difference between academic performance of male and female undergraduate students in Department of Education in the University of Maiduguri; revealed that there was significant difference between Grade Point Average of male and female undergraduate students in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri. The findings of this study seemed to be consistent with that of (Aryana, 2010; Arshad, Zaidi & Mahmood, 2015 & Adigun, Onihunwa, Irunokhai, Sada & Adesina, 2015) found a significant difference between male and female students academic performance among students in G.C. University Faisalabad, Pakistan, in favour of female. On the contrary, (Akinpelu, 1998; Abubakar, 2010 & Chinwuba & Osamuyimen, 2011) reported that there was no significant difference between academic performance of male and female accounting students in undergraduate in the University of Benin, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there exists a strong positive correlation between self-esteem and academic performance in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri. Furthermore, it can be deduced that high level of self-esteem leads to good academic performance. It was concluded that females do have significant dominance in academic performance over males in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri. It was also concluded that no difference exist in self-esteem between males and females in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, both males and females has fall within average self-esteem.

Implications for Counselling

The findings have implications for counselling. the counselors could extend his or her effectiveness through the employing of different counselling therapies and techniques to assist undergraduate students with poor academic performance, efforts should be made to improve the self-esteem of the students because it has been established by the findings that high self-esteem is positively correlated to academic performance of undergraduate students. All hands should be on deck in ensuring that appropriate counselling programmes such as group and individual counselling, supportive associations are designed to help undergraduate students with low self-esteem improve as it does not lead to the proper and successful moral, emotional, physical, social, and educational development of undergraduate students. Effort should be geared towards ensuring that appropriate counselling programmes are designed and implemented to bridge the gap in the academic performance between male and female undergraduate students in our society.

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