

**SELF-CONCEPT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UPPER BASIC  
SECONDARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS IN KWARA  
STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined Self-concept and academic performance of Upper basic secondary school Social Studies students in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey design. The population for this study consisted of students of Social Studies in public Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State and the sample for the study consisted of schools that had been presenting candidates for Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE). The result showed that there was a significant relationship between self-concept and the academic performance of Social Studies students ( $r=.427$ ). The study concluded that the factors determining the formation of the self-concept of an individual are: the environment, the people with whom the individual lives and who plays a very crucial role in the molding of individual's behaviours.*

## Introduction

In Nigeria, there have been drastic decline in academic performance of students in both internal and external examinations such as WAEC, NECO, and NABTEB. The annual release of Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) results conducted by the West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) justified the problematic nature and generalization of poor secondary school students' performance in different school subjects. The differential scholastic achievement of students in Nigeria has been and is still a source of concern and research interest to educators, government, parents, students and other stakeholders in the educational industry.

Consequently, several lines of research pursued over the decades have accumulated evidences and numerous factors that are associated with students' performance at all levels of education. Such factors could include: abstract nature of concepts (Nsofor, 2006; Ojiaku, 2003 and Shehu, 2006), inadequate qualified teachers (Biodun, 2004; Bajah, 2000; Daramola, 1982 & 1987), poor infrastructural and inadequate facilities (Okebukola, 1999; Shawl, 2003;), teacher centred instruction (Bajah, 2000; Fajola, 2000; Okeke, 2001), non-availability and utilization of instructional materials (Gambari & Gana, 2005, learning strategies Bajah, 2000; Biodun, 2004; Mathew, 2002 and Olorukooba, 2007), academic engagement (Gamoran & Mystrand, 1991), Parenting style (Baumri 1991), academic motivation (Grolnick, Ryan & Deci, 1991) to mention a few. However, much interest in self-concept as a factor that could influence academic performance of Social Studies students has not been explored especially in Kwara State, Nigeria. The literature on self-concept is voluminous and cannot be reviewed completely here. However, self-concept could be defined as individuals' understanding of their roles and characteristics. Self concept is also seen as the

totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings (Rosenberg, 1979). It refers to an overall evaluation of a person's life domains which has influence on individual's perception of himself or herself, which varies from situation to situation and goes through many changes with age. It moves from infancy to adulthood. Self-concept is the apex of the conceptualization. It is a general affective self-evaluation of a person as a whole. It is the general evaluation of attitude and feelings that students have about a subject.

The first multidimensional model of self-concept was presented in 1976 by Shavelson Huber and Stanton (1979). This model has become the foundation for the study of self-concept. Modern theorists posit that self-concept is multidimensional and thus argue that specific aspects of self-concept should be measured rather than measuring it globally. They proposed a general self-concept at the apex of the hierarchy that was divided into academic self-concept and non-academic self-concept. The non-academic self-concept is social, emotional and physical self-concepts. The academic self concept is further divided into self-concepts of specific subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (See Figure 1).

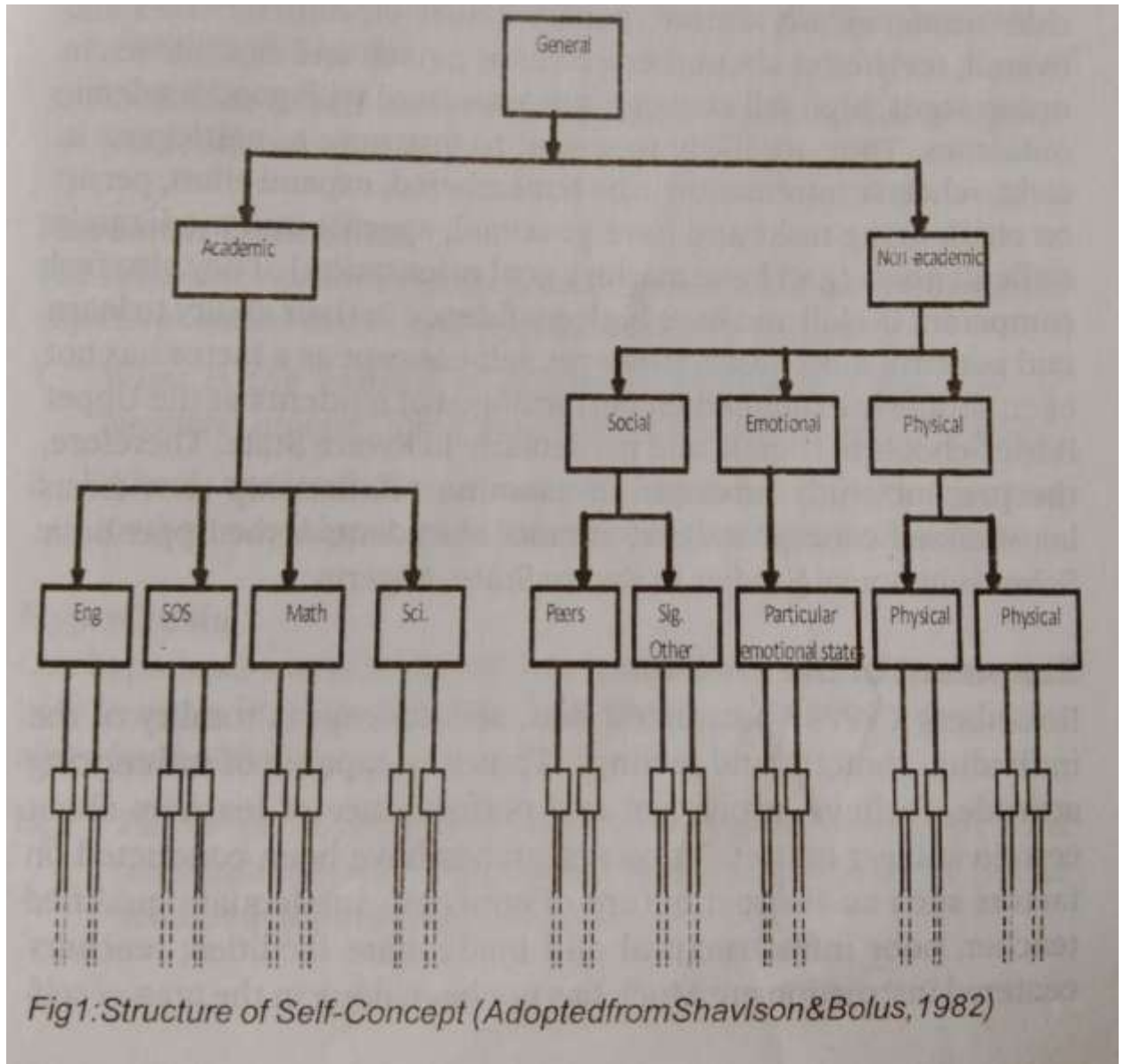


Fig1: Structure of Self-Concept (Adopted from Shavilson & Bolus, 1982)

The main factors determining the formation of self-concept of an individual are the environment as well as people with whom the individual lives who play a very crucial role in the molding of individual's behaviors.

Series of research work have been carried out on self-concept and academic achievement, for instance, Reynold (1988) examined measurement of academic self concept in college students. Shalvil and Valas (1999) studied relations among

achievement, self concept and motivation in Mathematics and Language Arts: A longitudinal study. Akinpelu (1998) examined academic achievement and self concept of male and female hearing-impaired student in Nigeria,

Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008) observed that strong positive self-concept lead students to set challenges attainable academic goals for themselves, feel less anxious in achievement setting, enjoy their academic work more, persist longer on difficult tasks and overall, feel better about themselves as person and as students. In order words, high self-concepts are associated with good academic outcomes. They are likely to attend to instruction, participate in tasks, rehearse information to be remembered, expand effort, persist on challenging tasks and have proximal, specific and moderately difficult goals (and have mastery goal orientation). They also feel competent in skill and have high confidence in their ability to learn and perform more tasks. However, self-concept as a factor has not been properly examined on performance of students at the Upper Basic Schools in Nigeria and particularly in Kwara State. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine relationship that exists between self-concept and performance of students at the Upper Basic Schools in Social Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Rosenberg (1979) postulated that, self-concept is totality of the individual thought and feelings. Thus it is capable of influencing attitude, feelings, aspiration and performance of learners about certain subject matter. Many researches have been conducted on factors such as abstract nature of concepts, inadequate qualified teacher, poor infrastructural and inadequate facilities; teachers centered instruction etc. Much has not been done in the area of self-Concept as affecting the interest and performance students in Social Studies. Therefore this paper intends to explore

self-concept and academic performance of Upper Basic Secondary School Social Studies Students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to examine relationship between academic self-concept and performance of Upper Basic Schools in Social Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to explore the:

1. typical self-concept among Upper Basic School students in Social Studies (Positive and Negative Self-Concept);
2. level of academic performance among Upper Basic School students in Social Studies (High, Average and Low Academic Performance); and
3. influence of self-concept on academic performance of Upper Basic School students in Social Studies.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were generated from the research objectives stated above and were answered in this study.

1. What is the pattern of academic self-concept (positive or negative) among Upper Basic School students in Social Studies?
2. What is the level of academic performance (High, Average and low) among Upper Basic School students in Social Studies?

### **Hypothesis**

One hypothesis was postulated from research objectives. It was tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation inferential statistics at alpha level of 0.05.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between self-concept and performance of Upper Basic Schools' students in Social Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### **Research Method**

This section deals with the general procedures that were used in carrying out this study. It focused on the Research Type; Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques, Instrumentation; Procedure Data Collection; and Techniques of Data Analysis.

The research type adopted was a descriptive survey type, It allows assessment of opinions that are held and gives a vivid description of what is in the area of study. The rationale for using descriptive method is that, it ensures preference and adequate representation of the students to arrive at reasonable conclusion on the relationship between self-concept and academic performance of students in Upper Basic Schools in Social Studies in Kwara State.

The population for this study consisted of the entire students of Social Studies in public Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Records available at the Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Development showed that there were 50 public Upper Basic Schools in Kwara Central Senatorial District (CSD), 123 in Kwara North Senatorial District (NSD) and 98 in Kwara South Senatorial District (SSD) making a total of 275. These schools have been presenting candidates for JSCE.

Based on the stratification, these schools were given identification numbers CSDO01 to CSDO50, NSD001 to NSD127 and SSDO01 to SSD98 respectively. These identification numbers were written on pieces of papers, wrapped and put in a container, out which proportionally 25% of Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State

were sampled. The numbers (CSD001 to CSD50) of the first category of schools were put in a container, wrapped and mix together. Thirteen (13) pieces of papers were randomly picked. The same procedures were carried out to other two categories. Therefore, 32 and 25 schools were then picked in North and South Senatorial Districts respectively. Thus, a total of 70 schools were used for this study. In each of the schools sampled, Upper Basic 2 Social Studies students in 2011/2012 academic session formed the target population for this study. However, 20 Social Studies students in each of the schools sampled were randomly used in the filling of the questionnaire. Therefore, the sample size consisted of 1400 students of Social Studies in the 70 sampled schools.

The researcher used an instrument (questionnaire to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire has 2 sections (A and B). Section A contained demographic characteristics while section B contained 35 statements that addressed Self-Concept. This present questionnaire was adopted from Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and Piers- Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale

(TSCS) was developed by Fitts in 1965. It is being adopted because it covers a complete range of psychological adjustments indicators. The Piers-Harris 2 is an improvement over that of 1984 and 1996 earlier versions. It is being adopted because it evaluates Self-Concept for children and adolescents similar to this present study.

Therefore, the present instrument "Self-Concept Questionnaire" identified five elements that formed the basis of the self-concept which are: Physical Appearance and Attributes, Athletic Competence, Morality Adjustment, Peer Acceptance and Popularity and lastly



Scholastic/Intellectual Competence. It consisted of 4-point Likert scale (Mostly False of Me as 1, False of Me as 2, True of Me as 3 and Mostly True of Me as 4). A weight score 4, 3, 2 and 1, were attached to positive statements and 1, 2, 3 and 4 were given to negative statements. The maximum possible score on the scale was 140 while the minimum possible score on the scale was 35. A raw score of 71 to 140 were classified as Positive Self-Concept. Similarly, the score ranging from 35 to 70 was considered as Negative Self-Concept. A result format would be prepared to collect JS2 promotion examination on Social Studies in academic session 2011/2012. The raw scores of the examination were collected.

The validity of the questionnaire was ascertained using face and content validity approach. This approach was used to determine the extent to which the statements in the questionnaire correspond with the focus of this study. To do this, the questionnaire was given to 3 lecturers in Psychology and 1 expert in Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation in the School of Education and Arts Social Sciences, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. During this process, some statements considered ambiguous were deleted while some others reconstructed.

The reliability of the questionnaire was established by employing test-retest reliability method. To do this, the questionnaire was administered to 20 students of Social Studies in a school who did not form part of the final respondents of this study. The data collected from the first and second administration with 4 weeks interval were

collated separately on statistical coding sheets and subjected to reliability estimate using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Inferential statistic with the use of SPSS 19.0 and obtained coefficient of 0.751.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher employed teachers of Social Studies in the sampled schools as research assistants. Permission to use students of Social Studies was sought from the principal of the sampled Upper Basic Schools. The researcher and the research assistant administered the questionnaire to the targeted population. The researcher visited 4 schools in a day. The Upper Basic Schools II students of Social Studies were gathered in a class or examination hall and serve them the questionnaire. Students were allowed to ask question (s) on any statement (s) that is not clear. The questionnaires were collected after completion.

### **Results**

Responses of the students of Social Studies to the questionnaire administered were scored according to the format of each section. The analyses were carried out with the use of IBM SPSS 20.0. Descriptive statistic inform of percentage was used to describe demographic characteristics of the students as illustrated below:

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Social Studies Students in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State**

Demographic	Characteristics	Frequency & percentage (%)
Gender	Male	164 (41.28%)
	Female	822 (58.72%)
	Total	1400 (100.0%)
Age	12 to 15 years	862 (61.57%)
	16 to 19 years	454 (32.43%)
	20 years >	84 (6.00%)
	Total	1400 (100.0%)

Table 1 indicates that out of 1400 students of Social Studies in upper basic sampled, 578 (41.28%) were males while the rest 822 (58.72%) were females. Furthermore, the table also reveals that 862 (61.57%) of the students were within the age limit of 12 to 15 years, 454 (32.43%) were within the age bracket of 16 to 19 years while 84 (6.00%) were within range of 20 years and above. Research questions 1 and 2 raised were answered with the use of percentage as shown below:

**Table 2: Level of Academic Performance and Self-Concept of Students of Social Studies in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State**

characteristics	Levels	Frequency & percentage (%)
Academic	High	164 (11.71%)
	Average	791 (59.50%)
	Low	445 (31.79%)
	Total	1400 (100.0%)
Self -Concept	Positive	511 (36.50%)
	Negative	889 (63.50%)
	Total	1400 (100.0%)

Table 2 shows that out of 1400 students of Social Studies in Upper Basic Schools sampled, 164 (11.71%), 791 (59.50%) and 445 (31.79%) had high, average and low academic performance respectively. In the same vein, 511 (36.50%) and 889 (63.50%) were in positive and negative self-concept respectively. The only research hypothesis postulated was tested with the use of Pearson Product

Moment Correlation statistic at alpha level of 0.05 and the output reveals thus:

**Table 3: Pearson "r" Showing Relationship Between Self Concept and Academic Performance of Students of Social Studies in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State**

Variables	No	Mean	Std.	Cal r-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Self-concept	1400	68.251	25.623	.427	0.03*
Academic performance	1400	54.743	19.202		

\*Sig. 0.05

Table 3 reveals that going by the calculated value (0.427) and sig. of 2-tailed (0.03), there is a significant but low relationship between self-concept and the academic performance of Social Studies students. This finding could be attributed to field observations made by the researchers that more than half (63.50%) of them has negative self-concept. It was also observed that 57.62% of the student's behaviors were influenced by peer groups. This finding is in line with Schunk, Pintrich & Meece (2008) observed that strong positive self-concept lead students to set challenges or goals yet attainable in their academic careers.

### **Conclusion**

From the finding it could be concluded that academic success or failure significantly affect the students' self-concept and vice versa.

With increasing life experience, students learn their relative strengths and weaknesses so that specific self-concept domains become more influenced, differentiated and more highly correlated with external indicators.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion reached, the following recommendations were put forward: The main factors determining the formation of the self-concept of an individual are: the environment as well as people with whom the individual lives with, and who play a very crucial role in the molding of the individual's behaviour. Therefore, Students should be exposed to favorable environmental conditions, so as to enhance favorable disposition which may lead to positive self-concept and thus, enhance academic performance.

The formation of positive self-concept and individuals' self evaluation among Secondary School students could be significantly enhanced good interactions with others in the home, school and community. The others include parents, teachers, peers and sibling etc.

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