INFLUENCE OF SELF-CONCEPT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

*Various studies have been carried out to determine the influence of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with special needs generally but there is little attention to determine the influence self-concept has on academic performance among adolescents with visual impairment. Also, adolescents with visual impairment are not performing academically as expected by the teacher and their social relationship with their peers is on the negative side due to their perception of self-concept. This study therefore investigated the influence self-concept has on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The main instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Three research questions guide the study. A total of sixty-six (66) respondents participated in the study. The data gathered were analyzed using Descriptive statistics, Mean, Standard Deviation and Multiple Regression. The result from the study revealed that self-concept does not influence academic performance among adolescents with visual impairment (rCal = - 0.00 p> 0.05), but self-concept has a significant influence on social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment (rCal = 0.261, p-value 0.034 < 0.05. Based on the findings, the study recommended that adolescents with visual impairment should be encouraged to develop a high self-concept to enhance positive psychological well-being.*

**Keywords:** Self-Concept, Academic Performance, Social Adjustment, Adolescents, Visual Impairment

**Introduction**

The influence of self-concept and self-efficacy on the academic performance and social adjustment of students with hearing impairment has been a subject of growing importance in educational research. Self-concept is the ability of people to feel good about themselves and their abilities. Self-concept relates to how well an individual feels they can learn. Self-concept varies across academic disciplines and can be affected by past academic performance. Students with visual impairment who have a high self-concept can feel they can do well academically or in their school work. Self-concept has been described as a desired outcome in and of itself, as well as a method for catalysing academics (Marsh & Hau, 2004). It is clear that in many instances students with learning disabilities lag behind their nondisabled peers in academic performance (Kavale & Forness, 2000), so it follows that they would also lag in their academic self-concept (Zeleke, 2004). Self-concept has impacts on a wide range of well-being outcomes including happiness, motivation, anxiety, depression and academic striving behaviours.

In Nigeria today, the academic performance of adolescents with visual impairment is not encouraging at all. Adolescents with visual impairment academic performance is not up to teachers' expectations; this is worrisome to the stakeholders. To affirm this, Dada (2015) reported that the academic performance of students in most institutions is not encouraging at all due to the psychological factors that affect students generally. Positive academic self-concept facilitates positive academic perspectives and behaviours such as persistence at academic tasks, positive academic choices, educational aspirations and academic achievement. Numerous researchers found that self-concept has an influence on social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment. Jaspa (2021) defines social adjustment as the psychological process by which a learner manages or copes with various demands. This implies that social adjustment is the process by which a living organism maintains a balance between its needs and the circumstances that influence these needs. It is an important indication of psychological health, without it, the learner will not be able to meet many of his or her basic needs. Social adjustment is the degree to which an individual engages in competent social behaviour and adapts to the immediate social context.

Research has shown that victimization experiences negatively influence social adjustment, mainly in the later stage of adolescence (Cillessen & Lansu, 2015). In this regard, it has been shown that adolescents who are victimized show low levels of social competence, acceptance and popularity (Scholte, Engels, Overbeek, de Kemp & Haselager, 2007; De Bruyn, Cillessen & Wissink, 2010), tend to be isolated and rejected and generally they have worse relationships with their peers (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton & Scheidt, 2004; Smith, Johnson and Williams, 2004). In psychology, social adjustment is the condition of a person who is able to adapt to changes in their physical, occupational, and social environment. In other words, social adjustment refers to the behavioural process of balancing conflicting needs or needs challenged by obstacles in the environment. Humans and animals regularly adjust to their environment. For example, when they are stimulated by their physiological state to seek food, they eat (if possible) to reduce their hunger and thus adjust to the hunger stimulus. Adjustment disorder occurs when there is an inability to make a normal adjustment to some need or stress in the environment. Successful social adjustment is crucial to having a high quality of life. Those who are unable to adjust well are more likely to have clinical anxiety or depression, as well as experience feelings of hopelessness, difficulty concentrating, sleeping problems and reckless behaviour (Bisson & Sakhuja, 2016).

Self-concept is necessary for individuals to achieve academically and serves as the impetus for all teaching that focuses on students as individuals (Stringer & Heath, 2008). The rationale behind promoting a healthy self-concept as a necessary element of enhancing academic performance is that if students' feelings about themselves can be positively enhanced, they will also experience a number of positive outcomes - including improved academic performance. Authorities in the field have said that enhancing self-perception is, in actuality, a suitable way to improve academic, social, and behavioural issues (Sze & Valentin, 2007). Visual impairment, according to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] (2021) is a medical condition primarily measured based on an individual's better eye visual acuity. Visual impairment may cause adolescents with visual impairment difficulties with his or her daily activities like reading and walking. Williams (2021) refers visual impairment to as the complete or partial inability to see. The impairment must persist even with the use of glasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery.

WHO (2022) added that at least 2.2 billion people have near or distant vision impairment. 1 billion people include those with moderate or severe distance visual impairment due to unaddressed refractive error (88.4 million), cataract (94 million), age-related macular degeneration (8 million), glaucoma (7.7 million), diabetic retinopathy (3.9 million) as well as near visual impairment caused by unaddressed presbyopia (Frick, Tahhan, Resnikoff, Papas, Burnett, Suit, Naduvilath & Naidoo, 2018). In terms of regional differences, the prevalence of visual impairment in low- and middle-income regions is estimated to be four times higher than in high-income regions (Global Burden of Disease [GBD], 2021). The rate of unaddressed visual impairment is estimated to be greater than 80% in western, eastern and central sub-Saharan Africa, while the rates in high-income regions of North America, Australia, Western Europe, and Asia-Pacific are reported to be lower than 10% (Frick, Tahhan, Resnikoff, Papas, Burnett, Suit, Naduvilath & Naidoo, 2018).

Cherry (2022) pointed out that self-concept is the image someone has of oneself. It is influenced by many forces, including interaction with important people in life. Bailey (2003) views self-concept as how someone perceives their behaviour, abilities and unique characteristics. Cherry (2022) added that self-concept can be explained as how adolescents with visual impairment view their personality traits, such as whether they are an extrovert or introvert; their roles in life such as whether they feel that being a parent, sibling, or friend, and partner are an important part of their identity; hobbies and passion that are important to their sense of identity, such as being a sports enthusiast or belonging to a certain political party; and how they feel about their interaction with the world. It was against this background the researcher examined the influence of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual impairment.

**Review of Related Literature**

Johnson and Brown (2020) reports revealed that a positive self-concept fosters a healthy self-image and higher levels of acceptance, enabling adolescents with visual impairment to develop more meaningful and social interactions/relationships. Confident self-perception can lead to increased social initiation, effective communication and better social skills facilitating smoother integration into peer groups and broader social context. Conversely, negative self-concept and social anxiety may hinder adolescents with visual impairment's ability to form connections and participate in social activities, potentially leading to feelings of isolation and withdrawal.

Mertinez and Williams (2021) studies on factors influencing self-concept development in adolescents with visual impairment found that several factors responsible for the self-concept development of adolescents with a visual impairment such as family support, teachers' motivation and participation of the adolescents with visual impairment in specialized educational programmes including interactions with other peers in the environment foster positive influence on the self-concept of adolescents with visual impairment. In contrast, negative experiences such as stigmatization, lack of accessible resources or limited opportunities for social interaction may contribute to a more negative self-concept.

Prince (2014) averred that the environment plays its role in this process. He also added that there is a place that has a lot of meaning and contributes to the future self-concept of adolescents with visual impairment through both ways they relate or interact with these environments. Self-concept can also change based on how and who people interact with (Kark, & Shamir, 2013). The development of self-concept is through interaction with others such as family members, close friends, and other people in the lives of adolescents with visual impairment (Cherry, 2022). Pesu, Viljaranta & Aunola (2016) opined that the more a teacher believes in high-performing adolescents with visual impairment, the higher their self-concept. Also, Richter, Appel and Calio (2014) reported that self-concept can be developed through the stories adolescents with visual impairment hear. The media (radio) also plays a role in the development of self-concept through the promotion of certain ideals, adolescents with visual impairment are likely to make those ideals their own and the more often these ideals are presented, the more they affect their self-concept (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2015).

Hamidi and Hosseinib (2010) pointed out that social adjustment is the major influential indication of psychological well-being. Social adjustment is considered to be effective for all domains of life, including human emotional, social, educational and occupational. From a psychological point of view, adjustment is the process by means of which the individual attempts to maintain a level of psychological and physiological stability (Keilmann, Fingerle & Stickelmann, 2007). Social adjustment is the key to maintaining one's psychological well-being. Social adjustment is the ability of an individual to adjust to his social life, which may be achieved by modifying the self or the surroundings (Pourafkari, 2001). Social adjustment is interlinked with emotional adjustment. Emotional adjustment is the harmonization between thoughts, emotions, feelings and behaviours and in this way, an individual performs healthier in every field of life (Omranian, Hjälmheden & Rahman, 2015). According to Hamidi and Hosseinib (2010), emotional adjustment is focused on making relationships with others in an understanding and controlling way. It is significant to point out that social adjustment, effective communication and emotional dealing are skills that should be acquired. An individual effort and its quality are necessary to learn it.

Adeyemi (2011) explained that the adolescence stage is challenged with socialization needs. Smith (2019) indicated in his study that self-concept significantly affects the academic performance of adolescents with visual impairment. He further explained that a positive self-concept is characterized by self-confidence and a sense of competence and it is associated with improved academic motivation, greater effort and persistence challenges. Also, his study on adolescents with visual impairment emphasized that adolescents who believe in their abilities are more likely to set higher academic goals and achieve better academic outcomes, conversely, a negative self-concept marked by self-doubt and feelings of incompetence can lead to decreased academic engagement and performance. The study by Yengumolki, Kalantarkouheh and Malekitabar (2015) revealed that self-concept has an influence on social adjustment and academic achievement among students but there is no significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement.

**Statement of Problem**

Adolescents with visual impairment have unique experiences in their academic performance. The psychological well-being of adolescents with visual impairment is a concern for both parents and teachers of adolescents with visual impairment especially the way adolescents with visual impairment perceive him or herself. Invariably, if adolescents with visual impairment believe in him or herself positively, then they will put more effort into achieving whatever activities they get involved in. Possession of a positive self-concept by adolescents with visual impairment in the classroom is vital to high academic performance and social adjustment. Visual impairment may lead to difficulty in accessing educational materials and participating fully in the class resulting in lower academic performance. This can influence self-concept in the academic domain. In addition, visual impairment may limit social interactions and opportunities for building social skills which can influence self-concept. Stigma and negative attitudes from others experienced by adolescents with visual impairment may affect the self-concept, academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual impairment. Hence, the study examined the influence of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual impairment.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to examine how self-concept has an influence on academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual impairment in Oyo and Lagos states of the southwest zone. The specific objectives drawn to guide this study include to;

1. Determine the relationship between the independent variable (self-concept) and dependent variables (academic performance and social adjustment) of adolescents with visual impairment.

2. Investigate the joint contribution of self-concept, academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual impairment.

3. Examine the relative influence of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual impairment.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the relationships that exist between independent variables (self-concept) and dependent variables (academic performance and social adjustment) among adolescents with visual impairment?

2. What is the joint contribution of self-concept, academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment?

3. What is the relative contribution of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual impairment, for instance, the influence self-concept has on academic performance among adolescents with visual impairment?

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design because no variable in the study was manipulated, rather the relationship among the variables was observed.

**Population**

The area of this study comprises adolescents with visual impairment in Southwest was Lagos and Ogun State in Southwest, Nigeria. The area of the study was Lagos and Ogun State in Southwest, Nigeria. The population consist of all adolescents impairment in the Southwest zone, of Nigeria.

**Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample of this study was purposive sampling technique which was used to select sixty-six (66) respondents, fifty (50) adolescents with visual impairment from schools in Lagos and sixteen (16) adolescents with visual impairments from Ogbomoso, Oyo state. The following four schools were purposively selected; Kings College Lagos, Queens College Yaba, Lagos, Pacelli School for the blind Surulere, Lagos and Blind Centre, Ogbomoso. These schools were found to have a high population of adolescents with visual impairment in Southwest, Nigeria. In all these schools, only 66 adolescents with visual impairment were purposively selected.

**Instruments**

The main instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire 'titled' "Influence of self-concept on the academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual impairment in Southwest, Nigeria (ISAPSAOAVI)".The instrument was a scale with four (4) Sections: Section A consists of demographic variables;

Section B: The Snellen Scale (screening)

The Snellen Scale is a vision screening instrument used to measure visual acuity or to ascertain the level of impairment (partial or total).

Section C: Self-concept questionnaire and academic performance questionnaire

Section D; School and Social Adjustment of adolescents with visual impairments

This measured school and social adjustment of Visual Impairment among adolescents with Visual Impairment. It is 10 items each about school and social adjustment, the respondent related agreement with each statement on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (score – 1) to strongly agree (score = 4) all together twenty items measured both school and social adjustment scale. The researcher ensured both the content and face validity of the instruments used. The instruments used were adapted from standardized test scales that were found adequate to measure the variables under investigation. On the scale used, changes were made to the construct to meet the purpose of the study. Modification was done on all scales and test re-test format was done on thirteen (13) adolescents in school for the handicapped Orita Aperin, Ibadan to obtain the reliability of the scale. It yielded 0.68.0.79 and 0.84 using the Cronbach Alfa coefficient. Administration of the instrument was done by the teachers and the braillist who served as the research assistants.

**Procedure for Data Collection**

Data collection was carried out by obtaining permission from each school principal before the administration of the instrument. Then, the purpose of the research was vividly explained explained to the respondents. The instrument was distributed to the respondents (adolescents with visual impairment).

**Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics, Mean, Standard Deviation and Multiple regression were used for data analysis.

**Results**

The results of the study are presented below:

**Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

**Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Visual Acuity**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Visual Acuity** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Partial Blindness | 15 | 22.7 |
| Total Blindness | 51 | 77.3 |
| **Total** | **66** | **100.0** |

Table 1 revealed that 15 respondents representing 22.7% of the respondents were partially blind and 51 respondents representing (77.3%) were blind. Therefore, the above result implies that the total blind had the highest percentage.

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Age**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age group | Frequency | Percentage |
| 12 to 15 years | 2 | 3.0 |
| 16 to 20years | 25 | 37.9 |
| 20 years and above | 39 | 59.1 |
| Total | 66 | 100.0% |

Table 2 revealed the frequency distribution according to the age range of the respondents. The result showed that respondents with an age range of 12 to 15 years were 2 (3.0%) while those with an age range of 16 to 20 years were 25 (37.9%) of the total respondents and respondents with an age range of 20 years and above were 39 (59.1%) of the total respondent. This showed that respondents with the age range of 20 years and above had the highest percentage.

**Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Male | 21 | 31.8 |
| Female | 45 | 68.2 |
| **Total** | **66** | **100.0** |

Table 3 revealed that 21 represented 31.8% of the respondents were male while 45(68.2%) were female. Therefore, the above result implies that females had the highest percentage used for this study.

**Research Questions**

**RQ1:** What is the relationship that exists between independent variables (self-concept) and dependent variables (academic performance and social adjustment) among adolescents with visual impairment?

**Table 1: Relationship between independent variables and dependent variables among adolescents with visual impairment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| Self-Concept | 1 |  |  |
| Academic performance  (P value) | -.001  .991 | 1 |  |
| Social Adjustment  (p value) | .261\*  .034 | .083  .510 | 1 |
| **Mean** | **84.68** | **61.98** | **51.53** |
| **Standard Deviation** | **9.49** | **17.52** | **11.12** |

The results in Table 1 show the Social Adjustment value yielded r = 0.261, positively related to self-concept and significant with the p-value 0.034 < 0.05. This shows a positive significant relationship. This implies that Social Adjustment is positively related to the Self-Concept of Visual Impairment. On the other hand, academic performance has a value is (r = - 0.001), which shows a negative relationship with Self-concept of Visual Impairment and is not significant with the p-value 0.991> 0.05. This implies that self-concept has no influence on academic performance among adolescents with visual impairment but self-concept has a significant influence on social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment.

**RQ2:** What is the joint contribution of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment?

**Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Composite effect of the Independent Variable on the Dependent Variable**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | Sum of Square | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Remark |
| Regression | 403.259 | 2 | 201.630 | 22.329 | .006 | Significant |
| Residual | 5453.059 | 63 | 86.556 |  |  |  |
| Total | 5856.318 | 65 |  |  |  |  |
| R= .262 |  | | | | | |
| R2 = .689 |
| Adjusted R2 =.393 |

Table 4.2.2 shows that the independent and dependent variables have a composite relationship (R = 0.262). Consequently, the independent variables accounted for 39.3% of the total variance in self-concept (Adjusted R2 =0.393). Furthermore, the combined effect is statistically significant (F(2/63) = 22.329; p=006 < 0.05). Therefore, the composite influence of the independent variables, academic performance and social adjustment accounted for 39.3% of the variation in the self-concept among visual Impairment.

**RQ3:** What is the relative contribution of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents with visual Impairment?

**Table 3: Relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables (Test of significance of the regression coefficients)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| B | Std. Error | Beta |
| (Constant) | 73.882 | 6.575 |  | 11.236 | .000 |
| Academic Performance | -.013 | .066 | -.023 | -.190 | .501 |
| Social Adjustment | .225 | .104 | .263 | 2.158 | .035 |

Table 3 reveals there is a significant relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. The relative coefficient of academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual Impairment. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables. Social Adjustment (β =0.263, t= 2.158, p < 0.05) indicates the most potent contributor to the prediction and has a relative contribution to self-concept among visual impairment, while academic performance (β = -.023, t= -0.190, p > 0.05), has negative and no relative contribution to self-concept among visual impairment. It implies that there is a relative contribution of the self-concept on social Adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment.

**Discussion of Findings**

In research question one, this finding is contrary to the findings of Nutsan (2011) whose study showed that self-identity determines students with visual impairment academic performance and social adjustment. This contrary may be due to location and teacher’s methodologies. In another study, Hefziba, Irit and Izhak (2006) found a similar result with this study that there was no correlation between self-concept and academic performance among adolescents with visual impairment, but self-concept influences social adjustment. However, in another study, Sara, Zaluda, Al-madeen (2016) found self-concept to have a significant correlation with academic performance and perceived social support.

From research question two, the findings of this study on the joint contribution of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment corroborate the study of Sara, Zahida and Al-madeen (2016) as well as Adeyemi (2011) indicating the influence self-concept have on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment. In an actual sense, the present study has also confirmed the joint influence of self-concept, academic performance and social adjustment to visual impairment.

From research question three, the findings of this study on the relative influence of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment are contrary to the claims of Pajare 2000 and Nutsa (2011) their finding individuals with visual impairment in their way have a positive influence on the academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment. Adeyemi (2011) found the relative influence of self-efficacy on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment, which implies that self-concept predicts academic performance and school social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment.

**Conclusion**

The study findings have revealed that there was a significant relationship between self-concept and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment. Also, there was a joint contribution of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment. Positive self-concept among adolescents with visual impairment is crucial for academic performance and social interaction with other peers. The self-concept among adolescents with visual impairment in the schools sampled has no relative influence on their academic performance but has on social adjustment. Hence cultivating positive and tailored interventions is essential to promote their overall well-being.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study.

1. Adolescents with visual impairment should be encouraged to develop a high self-concept to enhance positive psychological well-being.

2. Guidance counsellors should endeavour to develop a positive self-concept as this can increase social interaction and build social skills among adolescents with visual impairment.

3. Self-concept among adolescents with visual impairment does not influence their academic performance hence teachers should make available all disability-appropriate facilities and materials (mobility aids, technology aids and a friendly environment to facilitate smooth learning for adolescents with visual impairment.

4. Sighted peers of adolescents with visual impairment should be encouraged to accept them show empathy, and help them through during their social adjustment in school.

5. Parents and family of adolescents with visual impairment should encourage their adolescents with visual impairment should encourage their adolescents with visual impairment to believe in themselves which invariably helps them to put more effort into the things they do.

6. Adolescents with partial sight should be recognized and provided for in the curriculum rather than categorized as adolescents with total blindness.

7. Ministry of Education should include behaviour modification treatment in the curriculum of both adolescents with partial and total blindness.

8. Generally speaking, recognizing the influence of self-concept on academic performance and social adjustment among adolescents with visual impairment will go a long way for special education teachers, parents and caregivers to better support adolescents with visual impairment and empower them to achieve academic goals and successfully navigate their social world.

9. Discrimination, stigmatization and limited opportunities for social interaction can be reduced drastically by including adopted social activities among adolescents with visual impairment in school.

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