



Social expressivity, social sensitivity and social control as predictors of variation of academic self-concept among students

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Abstract

This paper examined how social skills such as social expressivity, social sensitivity and social control could predict the variability of academic self-concept among secondary school students in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. Correlation design was used in the study. A sample of 357 senior secondary two students drawn by multi-stage sampling technique through non-proportionate stratified random sampling method in all the three stages was used. Two researchers' made instruments were used to gather data. The instruments were tagged: Students' Social Skill Inventory (SSSI) and Students' Academic Self-Concept Assessment Scale (SASAS). The instruments were face validated and a reliability coefficient value of 0.74 and 0.77 respectively were obtained and hence considered adequate for the test of reliability. Result indicated that social skills: social expressivity, social sensitivity, and social control separately predicted academic self-concept. In view of the finding, it was recommended that students should be encouraged to develop their social skills due to their connection with academic self-concept.

Keywords: social skills, social expressivity, social sensitivity, social control, academic self-concept and students

Introduction

National Association of school psychologists, NASP (2002) ^[1] opined that good social skills promote resiliency among children facing crises and stressful events. On the contrary, poor social skills promote the experience of depression, aggression and anxiety. Poor social skills also promote the demonstration of poor academic performance as an indirect consequence. Despite the consequences of poor social skill, it is observed that some adolescents develop good social skills while some others develop poor social skills that are detrimental to the success of human endeavours. To support this Azizi and Jamaludin (2009) ^[2] stated that lack of social skills has been found to have adverse effects on the academic achievement among students in the high Schools Again that the students' self-confident which indirectly influence students' academic achievement depends to some extent on the level of interpersonal communication and social skills the students possessed.

Researchers such as Ateabadi, Yusefi and Moradi (2013) ^[1] have revealed that students differ in the levels they possess social skills. These variations in the level of social skills possessed by the students are manifested in the various ways students apply when trying to ask for help from their parents or peers such as asking for permission, apologizing etc. on the whole it could be deduced that these variations in social skills among students may contribute different levels of self-concept among them. This is because Azizi and Jamaludin (2009) ^[2] reported that students' confidence and abilities to interact comfortably in the classroom are closely linked to their self-concepts. In other words, the level of social skills possessed by an individual sometimes may determine their self-concepts and vice versa. In addition, Coyle in Azizi and Jamaludin (2009) ^[2] stated that sometimes teachers assessed their students on how well they interact with their peers and teachers during teaching learning processes. This teacher's assessment of the students determines their self-

confidence which in turn affects their self-concept.

It has also been observed that some students do not know the appropriate way of asking for help or assistance. Again, while some have performance deficits, other practice mutism, assertiveness, shyness, loneliness and the like.

It is observed that sometimes students fail to responds to questions in the classroom not because they have no idea of what to say but due to their level of expressivity, interaction skills, uncertainty, and fear of failing or making mistakes. All these may be due to lack of courage, communication skills and low self-perception of their ability which hinges on the self-concept. Again, many of the students in the secondary school today lack confidence in themselves. This is evidence in their attitude of changing or cancelling the right responses they made and later writing the wrong ones. On the other hand, some of them have confidence in themselves and it is revealed in their attitude of maintaining the first right responses they wrote. This stand to mean that low self-concepts hampers achievement in every endeavour while high self-concept propels achievements all round.

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All these attributes may hinge on low self-concept and lack of interactional skills hence may not contribute positively to high academic achievement. However, the possession of all these attributes varies from student to student. The variations have been attributed to many factors like students' characteristics only, teachers' characteristics only, and sometimes to both students and teachers' characteristics. Whichever may be the case, the researchers suspect self-concept to be among the characteristics. Thus, the crux of the matter is that the variations in the level of the students' academics elf-concept may be spurred by various factors. To this end this study is an attempt to predict

students' academic self-concept using their different levels of social skills' dimensions.

Conceptual Framework

Self-concept is regarded as the general idea or opinion of a person about him or herself. It is the sum of all the interrelated and organized ideas belief and attitude that each person holds about himself or herself (Purkey in Huitt, 2011) ^[11]. The self-concept of an individual is determined by the person's self-esteem and self-efficacy. So, if a person has low self-esteem, the self-concept may be shifted to the negative direction while with high self-esteem, the self-concept may curve to the positive direction. Hence, Frank (2011) ^[9] viewed self-concept as factual description of how one perceives oneself. To Bernstein Clarke-Stewart, Penner, Roy and Wickens (2010) ^[6] self-concept is the attitude one holds of oneself. It however extends to the general pattern of perception feelings, beliefs and values about oneself. It is assumed that self-concept exerts a powerful influence on the way we perceive, judge, behave and carry out actions, Nwankwo (2007:178) ^[15] defined self-concept as "the way an individual sees him/her self in terms of ability, interest, aptitudes and other personality characteristics". In the words of Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup (2008, p.106) ^[23], self-concept is "an individual's knowledge and beliefs about themselves, their ideas, feelings, attitudes and expectations". The authors added that learners' overall self-concept is made of their specific self-concept in academic (English, mathematics, arts and other subject) and non-academic such as social relation, and physical appearance.

At the second level, self-concept is considered at a more specific and distinct concepts. For instance, self-concept about social relationship might be considered more specifically as self-concept about relationship with peers, teachers, other adults and even parents. These various distinct conceptions of self-depend on many experiences and events of life such as sports, academic performances, assessment of one's body, friendships, artistic abilities, interactions and contributions to community etc.

It is observed that the distinct specific self-concepts for older adolescents and adults are not integrated into an overall self-concept but it is more situation-specific. That is say that one may have high self-concept in one subject area but low in another subject area. Again, what stimulates one's self-concepts to be high in one subject might differ from what may stimulate it to be high in another subject area.

Furthermore, self-concept can be described as self-construction, self-identity, self-perspective or self-structure. It is a collection of beliefs about oneself. It includes elements of academic performance and it gives answer to the question who am I? An individuals' self-concept is made up self-schemas of the past, present and future selves. The future selves or possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become or what they are afraid of becoming. The future selves may function as incentives for certain behaviours.

Nevertheless, self-concept is not the same with self-esteem, this is because while self-concept is a descriptive component of one's self e.g. I can solve problems in physics, self-esteem is evaluative component of one's self e.g. I feel excited that I can solve problems in physics. On the other hand, self-concept is to some extent related to self-esteem because people's self-esteem clearly determines

their self-concept. That means people can perform to a greater height knowing their abilities (Frenken in Huitt 2011) ^[11].

Self-concept is an individual's knowledge of oneself. Self-concept is made up of three aspects which include "the ideal self" (what the person desire to be) 'self' (what the person is) and "self-esteem" the attitude of the person over the gap between one's present status and the desired future status. At the school, self-concept is affected by the view teachers, parents and peers have about an individual student. Studies have shown that self-concept of an individual is influenced by their interaction with their peers.

Social skills

Social skills are the parts of behaviour that help an individual to understand and relate with others in the society. (Steadly, Schiwarte Levin and Luke 2011) ^[18]. Walker (1983, p.27) ^[21] defines social skill as a set of abilities that enables individual to start and maintain positive social relationship. They are also the set of competencies that promote good relationship with peers and school adjustment that enables individual to effectively cope with the larger society.

However, in the context of social and emotional learning, social skills are the abilities to identify and control emotional situation with ease, establishing good rapport with others. Bedwell and Moore (2010) ^[4] social skill is a collection of knowledge, competencies and abilities associated with effective interaction with the social environment. On the other hand, Wilson (2013) ^[22] stated that the foundation of an individual's social skills and communication skills form the basis that enables one to send and receive both verbal and non-verbal messages. This is because Riggio in Wilson (2013) ^[22] asserted that social skills depend on verbal and non-verbal domains of communication skills. The verbal components of social skills deal with the way an individual communicates and relates with others without body and facial movements. While the non-verbal components involve communication using body language and facial expression. To Liberman in Wilson (2013) ^[22], social skill is viewed as the daily conversation, encounter and interaction with others.

A social skill is the ability to understand both positive and negative feelings in self and others. In general, a social skill is the standard set of behaviours that promote or enhance effective interaction with others. Hence the development of social skills is the main outcome of schooling. The deficit in social skills among children hampers academic performance but promote emotional difficulties. This is explained in Sung (2009) ^[19] assertion which stated that success in school does not only depend on the knowledge of the subject matter but also on the acquisition of subject matter through effective interaction with teachers and other students, thus social skills form the basis of success since they help better adoption of interactions, conversation, initiating friendship and maintaining the relationship/friendship. That means that without good social skills one will find it difficult to share knowledge and ideas with other people (Steadly *et al*, 2011) ^[18].

Nevertheless, researches have shown that children who are deficient in social skills always experience difficulties in learning. For instance, Kavale and Forness in Steedly *et al* (2011) ^[18] found that 75% of students with learning disabilities had difficulties in social skills. Lack of social

skills can negatively affect academic achievements among students. On the other hand, good social skills relate positively with academic achievement (Feitosa, Del Prette & Del Prette, 2012) ^[8]. However social skills exhibited by people depend on the environment they found themselves and the situation at hand. For instance, when interacting with parents and families, a child would need to understand how and when to render apology and accept criticism. Then when relating with peers one needs to know how to show respect others. Some social skills that are related to classroom behaviour include knowing how and when to ask and answer questions, follow rules and accept responsibilities for one's actions.

It is a well-known fact that social skills play significant role in our daily activities but it is not very easy for one to show perfection in acquiring social skill. This is because improving one's social skills involve much trails and errors. However, for one to improved one's social skills, it is suggested that he should learn to interact with people within the environment, be kind to others, show cheerfulness with people and work towards achieving some specific goals.

Riggio's dimensions of social skills

The Riggios model of social skills has two components. They are the emotional component and the social component. Each of the components has three subscales. The emotional component includes: the emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity and emotions control. The social component has social expressivity, social sensitivity and social control. This paper is however focused on the social component and excludes the emotional component.

Social sensitivity

Social sensitivity is the ability of one to appropriately understand and read other people's feelings. It is the ability to be knowledgeable on the social norms (Riggio 1986) ^[17]. People who are high in social sensitivity, show sympathy to other peoples' feeling and accept people unconditionally irrespective of their differences. They listen and give attention to people. They also care for people and maintain good social relationship.

High socially sensitive people are knowledgeable and well acquainted with the social rules and norms. They are very much concerned about how they can respond appropriately to other people. Riggio (1986) ^[17] stated that high social sensitive are very much linked to social anxieties, which inhibits social interaction. This is as a result of their deep concern for appropriate social behaviour.

Furthermore, social sensitivity is partly social intelligence because it shares some attributes with it. Such similar attributes include taking concern for social problems, being open to new ideas, and helping others to be better enhanced. On this basis social sensitivity can be taken as a part of social competence. Social sensitivity influences group performance or general ability of a group. That means that people high in social sensitivity are likely to perform well at work (Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi and Morlorie 2010) ^[24]. Social sensitivity has positive link with team effectiveness. The socially sensitive are open to new ideas and thought, ever ready to correct any bad impressions about others and finally like to share responsibilities with others When faced with stressful condition, socially

sensitive people are easily upset. They are less tolerant to frustration. Those who are high in social sensitivity spend time to check and understand other people but scarcely expressing their feelings. On the whole, socially sensitive people are very cheerful, friendly, affectionate, reserved in talking and conscious of the future happenings (Bedwell & Moore, 2010) ^[4].

Social control

Social control is the ability to adapt to the character and behaviour of other people and also how to appear before other people in a well-presented manner. (Riggio & Carney, 2003) ^[15]. Social control is similar to having confidence in one's ability to do things appropriately in social gatherings. An individual with high social-control tries to avoid offending others. They also possess the ability to handle any social affairs by following the acceptable standard (Eaton, Funder & Riggio, 2007) ^[7]. People with high social control skill easily adjust to situations and thus are able to fit in to any social situations. Hence, they are very outspoken and bold. They are not ready to accept an impartial act or behaviour hence they prefer things to be orderly and organized. In social situations, social control is so much linked to self- confidence; people who are high in both social and emotional controls have the potential for effective leadership. Finally, Bedwell and Moore (2010) ^[4] asserted that people with high in social control leads to high level of tolerance and readiness to adapt to new ideas. Nevertheless, individuals high in social control sometimes express fear and as such find it difficult to behave naturally and according to expectation.

Social expressivity

This is the ability to initiate discussions and also to encourage other people to be part of the discussion. Those who have high ability in social expressivity are always very temperate, active and make articulate. They like to try new ideas and make new friends. Social expressivity skills play a very significant role in any oral or verbal interaction mostly between two persons. For instance, it is very much required in conducting oral presentation and interviews. People high in social expressivity readily initiate and have control in any social gathering mostly those that involve much speech.

Riggio (1986) ^[17] stated that people who are high in social expressivity are always comfortable and have confidence in themselves in carrying out any social activity. In other word, they are highly involving in social activities.

Theoretical Review

To corroborate the above conceptual frameworks, this work anchors on the self-categorization theory. Self categorization theory was propounded by John Turner, it is focused on the factors that influence the perception of people and the result of their perceptions. The theory mainly considered the process of understanding the role of grouping people into different groups of personality based on their believes and interaction with others in the society (Turner, 2005) ^[20].

Self-categorization was developed along with social identity approach to address issues related to what makes people to see themselves as members of the same group instead of different groups (Haslam, Alexander, Stephen and Micheal, 2011) ^[10]. Self- categorization theory plays a very

significant role in the academic field mostly in social psychology. This theory was first applied in the area of social interaction and relationship and as part of social identify approach it was applied in the special area of leadership and the personality factors (Turner, 2005) [20] one notion of the theory is that self is not the basis of cognition or identify but as the result of cognition system. Alternatively, self is not the centre of cognition or identity but the outcome of the identity process. In self-categorization theory, individuals are viewed to have two main identities which are a personal self and a collective self. The personal self is the special or unique features that make up oneself while the collective self indicates the information or the features of a given group of persons. Furthermore, the self-categorization theory states that the self-concept has two levels, which include personal and social identity. That means, the way one views oneself depends on the perception of the self and that of others. Self-concept changes between personal self and the collective self (social identity). The theory explains how individual view themselves personally, and in groups. It also explains what boosts individual attitudes towards themselves in relation to their commitment to their studies. This study was set to determine the extent social skills can predict self- concept and thus finds relevance in the theory.

Results

Table 1: Relative predictive power of the three social skills’ dimensions on students’ academic self-concept based on the three research questions and hypotheses.

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	28.57	6.056		4.718	0.000
Social expressivity	0.194	0.094	0.107	2.075	0.039
Social sensitivity	0.220	0.099	0.113	2.018	0.027
Social control	0.294	0.103	0.145	2.845	0.005

Dependent variable: academic self-concept

Table 4.3 above shows that the prediction of the academic self- concept among students using social expressivity when other variables are kept constant yielded a partial regression coefficient (beta) of 0. 107. The corresponding t-value associated with the multiple regression 2.075 was significant at 0.039 (P<0.05) level, which is lower than 0.05, the chosen level of probability. Therefore, social expressivity independently made a significant prediction for the variations in students’ academic self-concept. Hence null hypothesis 1 is rejected.

It is also revealed that the prediction of the variation in the academic self-concept among students using social sensitivity when other variables are kept constant yielded a partial regression coefficient (beta) of 0.0113. The corresponding t-value associated with the multiple regression 2.218 obtained is significant at 0.027 (P<0.05) level, which is lower than 0.05, the chosen level of probability. Therefore, social sensitivity independently predicted significantly for the variations in students’ academic self-concept, so, the null hypothesis 2 is rejected. Predicting the variations in the academic self-concept among students using social control when other variables are kept constant yielded a partial regression coefficient (beta) of 0.145 the corresponding t-value associated with the multiple regression 2.843 obtained was significant at 0.005 (P<0.05) level, which is lower than 0.05, the chosen level of

Questions

The conduct of this study was guided by the following research questions.

1. To what extent do social expressivity independently predict to the variations in self-concept among students?
2. To what extent do social sensitivity independently predict to the variations in self-concept among students?
3. To what extent do social control independently predict to the variations in self-concept among students?

Hypotheses

The conduct of the study was further guided by the following hypotheses stated in null form and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Social expressivity do not independently predict significantly to the variations in self-concept among students.
2. Social sensitivity do not independently predict significantly to the variations in self-concept among students.
3. Social control do not independently predict significantly to the variations in self-concept among students.

probability. Therefore, social control independently predicted significantly for the variation in students’ academic self-concept, thus the null hypothesis 3 is rejected. prediction of academic self-concept on social expressivity The result of this study revealed that social expressivity significantly predicted students for academic self-concept directly. This is based on the positive beta value which was significant at a level lower then 0.05, the chosen level of probability. This finding is not surprising but expected following the characteristics of individuals with high social impressibility which include socially bold, forthright and open to change, enjoy trying out new things, making new friends. So, something one enjoys doing, can lead to one’s confidence in doing it which will in turn lead to one’s high level of self-concept. Bringing to academics, if a student enjoys problem- solving in one subject or the other, or in other hand enjoys reading and carrying out one academic activity or the other, the students may develop confidence in him/her self which will turn lead to high academic self-concept.

Prediction of academic self-concept on social sensitivity

The result revealed that social sensitivity had a significant and positive prediction for academic self-concept. This was following the positive beta value obtained which was significant at level lower than the chosen level of

probability. This finding is not surprising following the attributes of individual who are high in social sensitivity. They are element of social competence involved high ability in role taking and high academic performance. An individual with good performance will always be confidence in oneself at the same time have a sense of accomplishment. All these are attributes of an individual with high self-concept.

Prediction of academic self-concept on social control

The result revealed that social control had a significant and positive prediction for academic self-concept. This was following the positive beta value which was significant at level lower than the chosen level of probability. Sequel to this, it is deduced that when the student's levels in social control increased, their levels in academic self-concept will also increase vice versa.

Implications of the study

The findings from this study have some implications for instance the study revealed that emotional sensitivity independently had a significant and negative prediction for academic self-concept among students. This implies that emotional sensitivity significantly inhibits academic self-concept among students. The study also revealed that social expressivity, social sensitivity and social control independently made significant and positive contributions to the variations in students' academic self-concept. This implies that emotional expressivity do not promote academic self-concept while social expressivity, social sensitivity and social control enhance academic self-concept among students.

In view of the implications it is recommended among other things that students should be motivated to have academic self-concept induced by social skills like social control, social sensitivity and social expressivity. This can be done through effective social skills training programmes. Also, teachers should be encouraged to adopt teaching method and strategies that is social skills enhancement oriented.

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