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## SELF-CONCEPT AS CORRELATE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The formation of self-concept and interpersonal relationship are pivotal to the developmental tasks of adolescence. In view of this, this study investigated the self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. The correlation research design was employed for the study. The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents who participated in the study. Data were collected using a self-designed instrument entitled “Self-Concept and Interpersonal Relationship Questionnaires” (SCIRQ); with a Cronbach Alpha reliability index of 0.78. The data collected were analyzed using percentage and Pearson’s (r) correlation statistic and all hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional (Cal.  $r = 0.29$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), physical (Cal.  $r = 0.34$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and social self-concepts (Cal.  $r = 0.43$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and interpersonal relationship among secondary school students in Kwara State; while a negative correlation was found between academic self-concept (Cal.  $r = -0.31$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and interpersonal relationship among the respondents. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that school counsellors, parents and other stakeholders in the education sector should enhance adolescents’ interpersonal relationship by strengthening their physical, social and emotional self-concepts through relevant social skills training and counseling interventions.

**KEYWORDS:** Self-concept, interpersonal relationship, in-school adolescents, Ilorin, Kwara State

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence represents one of the transition processes in human life. It is characterized by a tremendous pace in growth and change second only to that of infancy. The definition of adolescence is fairly universal; however, the duration and defining characteristics of this period may vary across time, cultures and socio-economic status. For many adolescents, the period might be challenging and confusing; thus, they exhibit different maladaptive behaviours as a result of their poor self-concept, which in turn influence their interpersonal relationship. This is why Arnett (2001) described adolescence as a period of “storm and stress” for adolescents, with dramatic development and influence on their self-concept.

Adolescents spend so much of their time in school and the school environment can be a strong factor in shaping their self-concept. Nevertheless, during the transition period, every adolescent is forced to carry out the tasks of developing a coherent self-concept and feeling of the continuity of self in different social situations and groups (Carter & Hall, 2003). Self-concept is generally refers to how one feels about or how one values one's self. This view is closely related to the way people feel about their ability, past experiences and what they think lies ahead for them.

Woolfolk (2010) viewed self-concept as an agent of self-development among children. The concept of self largely represents the level of an individual's faith in their personal attributes. It reflects a person's judgment of oneself based on the way they weigh the importance of their success. Prescott (2006) perceived self-concept as mental awareness, pre-conception and constant interest in oneself. The picture or a personal view of oneself is called self-concept, which includes an overview of one's appearance, physical health, abilities, weaknesses and behavior; which evolves through constant self-evaluation in different situations. Thus, the components or domains of self-concept encompass the academic, physical, emotional and social aspects of a person (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 2001).

Academic self-concept is the perception or belief that students' has about their ability to succeed in their academic pursuits.

The physical self-concept comprises how one perceives or confident about his/her physical ability and appearance. Emotional self-concept refers to the control that an individual has over expressing specific emotional states such as joy, happiness, love, stress, anxiety, anger and depression. Social self-concept is related to how one feels among peer self-concept and significant others. The overall sense of self thus could either be positive or negative in relation to the four domains or components of self. According to Ormrod (2000), there are three factors which influence the degree to which an adolescent form positive or negative self-concept; his/her own prior behaviours and performance, the behaviours of other individuals toward him/her and the expectations that he/she holds for future performance

Correlation of these four major domains of self-concept with interpersonal relationship among adolescents is the main purpose of this research. Rogers (1975) described the self as a social product, developed out of interpersonal relationships and is continuously striving for consistency. This suggests that the quality of interactions may contribute to or weaken the self-concept of an individual. Interpersonal relationships are concerned with the ability to relate to other people, to have relationships that are based on needs that can be satisfied through interacting with other humans and that require an individual to seek out relationships with others (Johnson, 2006).

According to Johnson (2006), interpersonal relationships are based on the needs that can be satisfied through interacting with other people, needs that require an individual to seek relationships with others; to belong or to relate in a positive way. Although the parent-child relationship plays a large

role in children's social-emotional competence in the years before school, after the start of formal schooling, interpersonal relationships in the school setting influence children's development, particularly in relation to self-concept (Ranson & Urichuk, 2008). Students with positive self-concept possess a higher social and emotional compatibility so they have the potentiality to make better progress in life (Nasir & Lin, 2012). Ybrandt (2008) showed in his findings that self-concept is a main factor in compatibility with the life events, behaviour problems, social relationship and peer interpersonal relationship.

Positive self-concept has been linked to various markers of positive development, including positive interpersonal relationships and overall happiness (Elbaum, 2002). Adolescents gauge the verbal and non-verbal reactions of significant people-parents and other family members in the early years and later friends, schoolmates and teachers to make judgments (Barker, 2007). Connected to the development of adolescents' self-concept, there are some secondary needs such as needs for positive regard from others and the need for positive self-regard which will in turn influence one's interpersonal relationship (Barker, 2007).

At secondary school level, students' self-concept is enhanced when they have cordial and long lasting interpersonal relationships with others. This is supported by Johnson (2006) when he says there is an almost universal recognition that a degree of warmth in interpersonal relationships is absolutely essential for psychological growth. Mampa (1995) findings revealed a significant, positive correlation between self-concept and interpersonal relationships among students. Spaight, Kenner and Dixon (2010) also examined students' perception on self-concept and the relationship. The findings of the study revealed that students perceived self-concept positively.

This study was backed by the Sullivan's interpersonal theory, which emphasized that individuals' belief of self and personality development is primarily determined by their interpersonal relationship with others, cultural groups and the society (Evans, 2006). Also, the attachment theory by Bowlby (1973) emphasized that adolescents pursue interpersonal interaction more vigorously at high school level and this may be influenced by the way they view or perceived themselves. This reiterated that interpersonal interaction originates from both biological and social features of adolescence and pivotal to the overall developmental tasks of that period. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the link between adolescents' self-concept and their interpersonal relationship with others.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Self-concept and interpersonal relationship are important development of one's personality, especially, for adolescents. Because of the fact that the environment plays a significant role is the socialization process of adolescents, their relationship with significant others such as parents, family, friends, teachers and others cannot be undermined. However, secondary school students tend to experience a low or negative self-concept during adolescence stage of life. For some, the decline can

become so severe that they may be unable to cope; thus, battling this till adulthood. Thus, mar their relationship with others. For example, in Kwara State, students had been found in the secondary schools having difficulty making friends, some had withdrawn from others, many were unable to take chances in the presence of others and inferiority complex had affected their problem-solving and decision-making process to the extent that they feel nothing is good about themselves as they battle with the feeling of worthlessness. A negative self-concept had been linked with a poor social competence or relationships (Tabone, 2011). So, addressing adolescents' self-concept as related to their interpersonal relationship is significant to the development of their total personality for overall success in life.

There is paucity of studies on the correlation between the educational, emotional, physical and social components of self-concepts and interpersonal relationship among adolescents in Nigeria. One of the earliest studies on adolescents' self-concept and interpersonal relationship was the study by Mampa (1995), which revealed that academic, emotional and social self-concept contributed to an increase in interpersonal relationships of the adolescents. Magano and Gouws (2011) explored the relationship between the social self-concepts of Black South African adolescents and a disadvantaged home environment. The findings revealed a significant relationship between home environment and the social self-concepts of adolescents. Ogunleye (2012) study showed that adolescents' social competence or self-concept has effect on their romantic relationship. Preckel, Rach and Scherrer (2017) findings also indicated that that academic self-concept correlated negatively with the respondents' relations with peers and others; while social self-concept was positively correlated. This current study therefore, considered it important to examine whether or not relationship will exist between self-concept and interpersonal relationship among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant correlation between academic self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.
2. There is no significant correlation between emotional self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.
3. There is no significant correlation between physical self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.
4. There is no significant correlation between social self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

## METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study was correlational survey method. The design was chosen because it affords the researcher the opportunity to collect data from the respondents conveniently and establish the relationship that exists between the independent variables and the dependent variable from a quantitative data collected from the respondents through the questionnaires. Correlational design measures the level or type of relationship between two or more variables or set of scores.

The population for this study comprises all secondary school students in Kwara State which was 195,717 (Kwara State Ministry of Education, 2016). The target population comprises all in-school adolescent of 10 selected secondary schools across the three senatorial districts of Kwara South, North and Central. The procedures used in selecting sample for the study were proportional and random sampling techniques. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select schools in Kwara South, North and Central in ratio 4:3:3 respectively. Random sampling was used to select 20 respondents from the 10 selected secondary schools. Therefore, the total sample for this study was 200 respondents. According to Osaze and Izedonmi (2006), random sampling is a method where every element in a population has an equal chance of being selected. The selection of one respondent has no influence on the selection of or non-selection of the other.

The main instruments used for data collection in this study were self-designed questionnaires tagged “Self-Concept” and “Interpersonal Relationship” scales. The questionnaire consists of three (3) sections: A, B and C. Section A focuses on the demographic data of the respondents. Section B contained twenty (40) items on the four domains of self-concept; while Section C contained 15 items on interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents. In section B and C, the respondents responded to the items using the four point Likert-type rating scales format of: Strongly Agree = 4 points; Agree = 3 points; Disagree = 2 points; and Strongly Disagree = 1 point.

The validity of the instrument was established by given the draft of the questionnaires to the experts in psychology and guidance and counselling disciplines. Their amendment and observations were incorporated into the final draft of the instruments before its administration to the target respondents. In addition, the reliability of the instruments was ascertained using the test re-test reliability method. The instrument was administered to a group of twenty (20) secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis who did not form part of the respondents for the study and after an interval of four weeks; the same instrument was re-administered to the same group of people. The two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula. The correlation co-efficient obtained were 0.77 and 0.81 for the “self-concept” and “interpersonal relationship” scales respectively. Given these reliability indices, the instruments were considered reliable for data collection from the respondents.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula (r) was used to test the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

Four null hypotheses were postulated and tested in this study. The results are presented as follows:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant correlation between academic self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

**Table 1: PPMC on Correlation between Academic Self-concept and Interpersonal Relationship of in-school Adolescents**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. r	p-value	Remark
Academic self-concept	200	32.41	8.01	198	- 0.31	0.000	Rejected
IR	200	31.11	8.62				

\* Sig. at  $p < 0.05$ ; IR = Interpersonal Relationship

Table 1 presents the calculated r-value of -0.31, with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 which is less at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between the independent and dependent variables; hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant negative correlation between academic self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant correlation between emotional self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

**Table 2: PPMC on Correlation between Emotional Self-concept and Interpersonal Relationship of in-school Adolescents**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. r	p-value	Remark
Emotional self-concept	200	30.91	9.01	198	0.29	0.000	Rejected
IR	200	31.11	8.62				

\* Sig. at  $p < 0.05$ ; IR = Interpersonal Relationship

Table 2 presents the calculated r-value of 0.29, with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 which is less at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between the

independent and dependent variables; hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant positive correlation between emotional self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant correlation between physical self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

**Table 3: PPMC on Correlation between Physical Self-concept and Interpersonal Relationship of in-school Adolescents**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. r	p-value	Remark
Physical self-concept	200	29.89	8.88	198	0.34	0.000	Rejected
IR	200	31.11	8.62				

\* Sig. at  $p < 0.05$ ; IR = Interpersonal Relationship

Table 3 presents the calculated r-value of 0.34, with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 which is less at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables; hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant positive correlation between physical self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant correlation between social self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

**Table 4: PPMC on Correlation between Social Self-concept and Interpersonal Relationship of in-school Adolescents**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. r	p-value	Remark
Social self-concept	200	32.99	8.06	198	0.43	0.000	Rejected
IR	200	31.11	8.62				

\* Sig. at  $p < 0.05$ ; IR = Interpersonal Relationship

Table 4 presents the calculated r-value of 0.43, with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 which is less at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables; hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant positive correlation between social self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

## DISCUSSION

The finding of this study revealed that there is a significant negative correlation between academic self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This implies that students' positive academic self-concept will lead to a corresponding negative interpersonal relationship and vice-versa. An individual with positive perception of his/her academic prowess and ability may likely develop lower level of interpersonal relationship with others. Perhaps, more of their time and strength is focus or concentrated on their studies and educational activities rather than on socializing around the people in their environment. Adolescents with positive academic self-concept might likely be introversion in personality traits, thus, relate less with peers, friends and their teachers but devote their time and resources to their studies. This current finding concurs with the study of Preckel, Rach and Scherrer (2017) whose finding revealed that negative correlation exists between academic self-concept and interpersonal relationship of higher school students. Agreement of this current finding with the previous studies could have resulted from the fact that respondents of similar age group participated in the studies and perhaps, possess similar personality attributes.

The correlation statistical result showed that there is a significant positive correlation between emotional self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This means that positive emotional self-concept is associated with a positive interpersonal relation. Likewise, a negative emotional self-concept is linked to a negative interpersonal relationship. A student, who is not emotionally strong and competent in fulfilling everyday activities, will likely have low level of relationship with other people around him/her. If adolescents are stable emotionally and could regulate or control their temperament, they are much likely to socialize positively with peers and older adults in the environment. The finding of this study is similar with the studies of Mampa (1995); Magano and Gouws (2011) whose finding indicated that there is a positive correlation between emotional self-concept and interpersonal relationship among secondary school students. The finding of this study complied with the previous study perhaps, because they were conducted in the same locale and the methodology adopted were similar. This finding suggests that an individual with a positive or strong emotional self-concept is likely to be proficient or positive in their relationship with others in the environment.

The Pearson's ( $r$ ) statistical result also revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between physical self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This means that a strong and positive perception in one's physical ability and capability could be linked to effectiveness in relationship with other people in one's environment. On the other hand, an individual with a negative belief or perception in their physical strength and agility is likely to become ineffective or poor in his/her relationships with other people in the society. This current finding is in line with the study of Preckel, Rach and Scherrer (2017) whose finding showed that a positive correlation exists between physical component of self-concept and adolescents' interpersonal relationship. Agreement of this result with the past studies perhaps, because of the number of sample used was closely related and the studies focus were the same. The finding of this study suggests that an individual confident



and belief in their physical strength and agility is expected to be socialite among peers and other people in his/her environment.

Another finding from the result of this study revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between social self-concept and interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This implies that the stronger an individual becomes in their social self-concept, the higher their effectiveness in interpersonal relationship and vice-versa. An individual who is proficient and confident in his/her social endeavours may likely become effective in his/her relationship with other people in the environment. Likewise, if an individual is poor in their social life, they may as well portray a poor interpersonal relationship with people around them. The finding of this study is consistent with the studies of Magano and Gouws (2011); Ogunleye (2012) which revealed that social self-concept is positively correlated with interpersonal relationship among adolescents. This finding and the previous researches agreed perhaps, as a result of similarity in the respondents age range. The finding of this study suggests that strong belief in someone's ability to socialize is expected to enhance his/her interpersonal relationship with others in the society.

### CONCLUSION

The finding of this study revealed that emotional, physical and social self-concepts are positively correlated with interpersonal relationship of in-school adolescents; while academic self-concept has a negative correlation with the students' interpersonal relationship. The findings suggests that self-concept is one of the significant personality variables that must be fostered in adolescents' socio-emotional needs for them to be socially competent and interact effectively with varying members of the society.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It was recommended based on the findings of this study that:

1. Parents and schools should build children's self-concept and interpersonal relationship with others by improving their morale and confidence that they should believe in themselves in accomplishing whatever they focus on and through their positive daily engagement with people.
2. School counsellors should equip secondary school students with social skills training such as assertiveness skills, personal and interpersonal relationship skills, problem-solving and decision making skills; and employ different counselling interventions like self-instructional talk to build students' self-concept and enhance their interpersonal relationships with others.

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