Self Concept and Occupational Aspiration Among Secondary School Students In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
This paper investigated self concept and occupational aspiration among Senior Secondary School Students in Ahoada East Local Government Area in Rivers State. The study was a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was three thousand, one hundred and fifty (3,150) SS1 students. Three hundred and twelve (312) SS1 students were selected through stratified random sampling technique for the study. Two statistics were used: The Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistic were used at 0.05 significance level. The findings showed that: (1) Self concept has significant relationship with students’ occupational aspiration. (2) There is significant difference between students with high self concept and their occupational aspirations. (3) There is no significant difference between self concept and occupational aspiration of male and female students. Three recommendations were made for implication. They are as follows: (i) Students should develop outstanding self concept to guarantee congruent occupational aspiration. (ii) Counsellors should be employed and empowered to aid students build positive and objective self concepts using; cognitive restructuring therapy and transactional analysis. (iii) Seminars and symposia should be organized to educate parent on the implications of castigating and condemning their children.

Keywords: Self-concept, vocational interest, Counsellors, career theory, Secondary School Students

INTRODUCTION
The self has to do with the individual’s experiences with the world, as self emerges through the use of “I or me” of our human experiences. The self is a whole, sum total of one’s self-perception, that is, how brilliant, attractive, handsome one is.
Self-concept refers to individuals’ overall perceptions of their abilities, behaviour and personality (Santrock, 2000). A person who has an inaccurate self-concept could likely make a wrong career choice. One’s self-concept is the totality of beliefs about oneself, including academic performance. Academic self-concept could be seen as one’s own beliefs about the efficacy of his or her academic abilities in comparison with peers in group or class rating.
The Gottfredson’s theory of circumscription, compromise, and self-creation (1981) is a career theory that describes the career development process of children and adolescents. The theory explained how people see themselves and affirm who they are, and what they worth affect vocational aspiration and outcomes. Gottfredson (1981) further indicated that individuals have the ability to improve their career aspiration and integrate their self-concept into their career decision making plans.
Super (1953) was popularly known for his theory of self-concept. His emphasis on the career aspiration cannot be overstated. He defined self-concept as an individual’s perception of his or her personality, abilities, potential and preferences. Super, further indicated that self concept changes and develops over time as individuals acquire experiences and learn how they are different from others. Kinanee (2012), defines self-concept as the way in which an individual perceives himself or herself in terms of evaluating oneself. Kelly (2004) sees self-concept as the awareness of one’s attributes, judgements, and values in relation to one’s behaviour, abilities and capabilities.
The self-concept of a student affects his/her emotion, vision and ambition. The preceding assertion, hinge on the findings of Oyejiaku (1991); and Eremie (2015) indicating that students who have low
self-esteem have high preference for occupations life farming, while those with high self esteem prefer professionally oriented occupations.

Hanson was of the view that Nigerian secondary schools have unspecific patterns of students’ aspiration in terms of interest search in vocational subjects and combinations in school certificate examination. Self-concept has been viewed to affect occupational maturity and motivation (Okereke, 2006; Meyer, 1995 and Meyer 1991). Salawa and Bagudo (2000), investigated the relationship between self-concept and career choice of students in post-secondary institution in Sokoto State. The findings of the study indicated that there was no significant difference between sex of students and their self concept; that there was significant difference in the career choice of male and female students. Also the study concluded that there was significant relationship between students’ self-concept and their career choice. Similarly, Otta and Njoku (2012) investigated self concept and Vocational interest among secondary school students Ohafia Educational Zone of Abia State, with a sample size of 312, SSII students. The findings of the study revealed that: (1) there was a significant relationship between self concept and vocational interest; (2) there was no significant difference between the male students in their vocational interest.

**Statement of the Problem**

Several studies have revealed that secondary school students do experience inadequate and bogus self-concept leading to incompatible self-concept and occupational aspiration in some regions in Nigeria. Little or no study has been carried out to investigate self-concept and occupational aspiration among secondary school students in Rivers State. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate to understand the present status of Secondary School Students in Rivers State in their view of Self concept and vocational aspiration.

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Ho1:** Self concept has no significant relationship with students’ occupational aspiration.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference between students with high self concept and their occupational aspiration and those with low self concept and their occupational aspiration.

**Ho3:** There is no significant difference between self concept and occupational aspiration of male and female students.

**METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The study was conducted in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State. The population of the study comprised of three thousand, one hundred and fifty (3,150) Senior Secondary School Students. Stratified sampling technique was utilized to select three hundred and twelve (312) SS I students for the study. “Student Self Esteem Scale” (SSES) developed by Eremie (2015) was used for collection of data for the study. The instrument has test-test reliability coefficient of 0.78. In addition, “Student Vocational Interest Inventory” (SVII) was developed by researchers, with 0.85 reliability coefficient of test-retest of the instrument. The “SSES” has 20 items in Likert Scale, while the “SVII” has 25 items in Likert Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), strongly disagree (2) and agree (1). A weighted average of 2.50 was considered accepted.

**RESULTS**

**Hypothesis 1:** Self concept has no significant relationship with student occupational aspiration.

**Table 1:** Relationship between self concept and occupational aspiration of Senior Secondary School Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables (X and Y)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$\Sigma x^2$</th>
<th>$\Sigma y^2$</th>
<th>$\Sigma x^2$</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Zrcal</th>
<th>Zcrit</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self concept vs. occupational aspiration</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of table one showed that self concept has a significant relationship with students occupational aspiration. That is, $Z_{rcal} \ 2.61 \ > \ Z_{crit} \ 1.96$
Hypothesis 2
There is no significant difference between students with high self concept and their occupational aspiration and those with low self-concept and their occupational aspiration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>T-cal</th>
<th>T-cri</th>
<th>Dec. Reject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>57.311</td>
<td>7.886</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td>12.494</td>
<td>1.980</td>
<td>H02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>50.389</td>
<td>7.378</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value (12.494) is greater than the critical t-value 1.980 at 0.05 level of significance. That means, the null hypothesis is rejected while, its alternative is retained. Therefore, level of self concept significantly influences occupational aspiration.

Hypothesis 3
There is no significant difference between self concept and occupational aspiration of male and female students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>S.D Error</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-cri</th>
<th>Dec. Accept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>55.401</td>
<td>8.665</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>0.647</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.980</td>
<td>H03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>54.486</td>
<td>9.424</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value (1.41) is less than the critical t-value of 1.980 at 0.05 level of significance hence, the null hypothesis is retained and its alternative rejected. Therefore once can deduce that gender has no significant influence on self concept and occupational aspiration of students.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS
The study investigates self concept and occupational aspiration of Secondary school students in Ahoada East local Government Area of Rivers State. The result of hypothesis one shows that self concept has a significant relationship with students occupational aspiration. This result is consistent with the findings of Hassan (2008), that self concept influence occupational aspiration.

More so, the result consolidates the findings of Onyejiaku (1991), that self concept is correlated to occupational aspiration. Hence, one can infer that the self concept of a student, master minds his/her occupation inspiration.

The findings of hypothesis two showed that there is a significant difference between students with high self concept and their occupational aspiration and those with low self concept and their occupational aspiration. Students with high self concept were found to aspire for investigative, enterprising social and conventional occupation which offers white collar jobs. On the other hands, student with low self concept were found to aspire for artistic and realistic occupation this result is in agreement with the findings of Onyejiaku (1991) that young people who have low self concept, have high preferences for realistic occupation such as; farming while those with high self concept prefer professionally oriented occupations.

The findings of hypothesis three showed that there is no significant difference between self concept and occupational aspiration of male and female students. This result contradicts the findings of Arowolo (2010) and Uwa (1999) that there exist significant difference between students self concept and occupation aspiration on the basis of gender. This discrepancy could be as a result of environmental, sociological and anthropological influences. Moreso, in equity and gender equality, cannot be left out in this consideration. Females have been helped to develop and enveloped their self concept and occupational aspiration cognizant of the fact that all humans are equal.
CONCLUSION
The study concluded the followings:
1. Self concept has significant relationship with students’ occupational aspiration.
2. There is significant difference between students with high self concept and their occupational aspiration.
3. There is no significant difference between self concept and occupational aspiration of male and female students.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The researcher recommends as follows:
1. Students should develop outstanding self concept to guarantee congruent occupational aspiration.
2. Counsellors should be employed and empowered to aid students build positive and objective self concepts using; cognitive restructuring therapy and transactional analysis.
3. Seminars and symposia should be organized to educate parent on the implications of castigating and condemning their children.

REFERENCES