Influence of Self-concept on the Academic Performance of University Freshmen Students in University Port Harcourt and Its Counselling Implications

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ABSTRACT
The study examined the influence of self-concept on the academic performance of University freshmen students in University of Port Harcourt. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed three (3) specific objectives, three research questions and three null hypotheses respectively guided the conduct of the study. The research design used for the study was a descriptive research design. The population of this study was all the freshmen in Faculty of Humanities, University Port Harcourt in 2021/2022 academic session with a population size of 700 students. The sampling techniques adopted for this study was a combination of stratified, purposive and accidental sampling techniques with a sample size of 350 students which is 50% of the total population. The instrument used for the data collection was self-structured questionnaire. The data gathered were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significant. The findings of the study reveals that academic self-concept, social self-concept and physical self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that: Parents and lecturers should show love and empathy in their dealings with the children or students. This will help them develop positive feelings about themselves and positive academic self-concept. This will in turn enhance their academic performance, Lecturers and parents should help the students to build up their social self-concept, since students with high social self-concept perform better than their counterparts with low social self-concept academically and Lecturers and parents should help the students build up a physical positive self-concept that will help them cope with the deficiencies in them to enhance their academic performance
Keywords: self-concept, academic performance, University freshmen students,

INTRODUCTION
Education is a life-wire and asset to any nation. It is one of the focal reasons why Nigeria in particular invests in education. It is stated in the Nigerian National Policy on Education that, "The Federal Government of Nigeria has concluded that every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities, each according to his or her ability; education shall continue to be highly rated in the National Development Plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of

any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution (NPE, 2014). Therefore, if a good education is necessary for the attainment of developmental strides in Nigeria, then there is need to search for variables which can make a difference in learning and generally improve academic performance.

However, different variables or factors are capable of influencing the academic performance of University students in general and the freshmen in particular - factors such as environments, (home and school environment) and the students' self-concept. Such factors also may be the students' internal state (intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety) and their school environment (availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like well-equipped libraries and laboratories). Investigation on these factors has produced several findings: for example, Essien (2014) and Usoro (2017) have attributed the cause of poor academic performance to a combination of personal and institutional factors. Personal factors relate to the individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability. Institutional factors on the other hand, are family or parental influences, societal influences, institutional influences and school related factors-students and lecturer rapport, teacher related factors, accommodation and living conditions.

The factors that influence academic performance of students have attracted the interest and concern of counselors, psychologists, lecturers, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria. This is because of public outcries concerning the standard of education including University education in the country. These freshmen when they gain admission into the Universities, they take general courses such as GSS 1101 – Use of English. In the University, the certificate that students graduate with is the sum of all the grades obtained in all the courses, including GSS 1101 – Use of English. Where the student did not take his or her studies serious at this initial stage, the grades obtained then will have negative effect on their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). It is therefore, important that the students should be counselled on the need to take their studies seriously right from the inception, so that they can graduate with a worthwhile certificate. It is in the light of this, that it is important for counseling services, to be organized for these freshmen such as, orientation programme for freshmen, administrative interaction with a view to adjust to the new environment and taking their course of study seriously. There is, therefore, need for a continual search for means and strategies for improving performance and learning among students. For the achievement of making students take their studies serious from the onset, there is need therefore, to identify the factors that account for poor academic performances so that those factors may be harnessed to maximize students' progress and performance.

Studies by Akpan (2016) on Environment and self-concept mainly focused on the secondary and basic (primary) levels of education. Although, these studies provided evidence on the role the home and the school environment, as well as, self-concept play on academic performance. However, very little is known about how these variables affect students performance, particularly, the University freshmen's academic performance in GSS 1101, (Use of English) at the tertiary (University) level of education. This missing gap is what drew the researcher's attention to the topic under study (Environment, Self-concept and Academic Performance of University Freshmen in GSS 1101 in the South-South Zone of Nigeria). The researcher also believes that providing data on the extent to which these variables impact on academic performance in the General Studies and Communication Skills (GSS) courses especially (GSS 1101 - Use of English Language), could be useful as a starting point to address some basic problems that the freshmen are faced with in the University.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Self-concept and University freshmen's academic performance
Academic self-concept and University freshmen's academic performance: In educational psychology, academic self-concept is an important construct that has stimulated widespread research. Usoro (2017) asserts that a positive academic self-concept is beneficial, especially for motivating learners to improve their academic performance. Self-concept refers to the individual's self-beliefs, hypotheses and assumptions. In other words, self-concept of an individual is the totality of opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence. It is multifaceted and influenced by contextual variables as the case maybe. Academic self-concept on the other hand, refers to a person's "perception of

self with respect to his or her academic performance. Bracken (2019) defines academic self-concept as how a person feels about himself or herself within a school or academic setting, or in relation to a student's academic progress. Academic self-concept, for example, is an individual's self-concept of competence and his/her evaluative judgments in the academic domain.

Usoro (2017) carried out a study to determine the relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement in English and general subjects of the students of high school. A total of 320 students studying in 4th grade of high school in West of Mazandaran province were chosen by using intact sampling method. The data collection instrument for academic self-concept was academic self-concept questionnaire (ASCQ). For obtaining data on student achievement and English test and general test including three subjects of Arabic, Persian Literature and Theology were used. The findings showed a close relationship between academic self-concept and measures of academic achievement in both English and Grade point Average. Based on the finding of the study, it is necessary to give sufficient and proper attention to self-concept and teacher/lecturers should be offered methodological guidance in order to work on it through the educational process.

According to Essien (2014) in a study titled self-concept and academic achievement of students at the higher secondary level in Tanilnadu, India. The target population for the study was students in different categories of schools following different systems of education at the higher secondary level. From the target population, a sample of 321 students (106 State, 110 matriculation and 105 central board schools was chosen. The instrument used for data collection was self-concept inventory and the achievement in all the subjects. The findings of the study revealed that students belonging to central board schools were better in their self-concept and academic achievement when compared to students from other boards. There is also a significant and positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of students at the higher secondary level.

In the study of Ukpong (2010) on the psychosocial process of human development, the author opined that man evolved as a social being capable of interacting with others through the use of social symbols. His self is not initially there at birth, but arises in the process of social experiences and activities. According to Ukpong he is an active agent and not a passive recipient of external stimuli. Ukpong (2010) stated that man responds selectively to external stimuli and interprets them symbolically with reference to self. Self concept is known to be the complex and dynamic system of beliefs which one holds true about himself or herself. It is a process and is continually developing and changing.

She further argued that a close relationship exists between the functioning of the mind (i.e. rational thought) and the self. It is assumed that an individual is a rational thinking being who can reason, understand and anticipate future consequences. Thus, one's self-concept develops in the course of taking attitude of others in general. She further stressed that the self cannot be understood apart from the functioning of the mind. One of the important manifestations of these rational abilities is self-consciousness. Diggory (2010) from his research discovered that failure in activities that are important and highly rated lowers one's self evaluation in other seemingly related abilities. Conversely, success as an important and highly rated task raises the self evaluation in other abilities. Ukpong further observed that the theory of self forms the basis for a growing number of studies attempting to determine the existing relationships between "bright students" perception of themselves and their abilities.

Purkey (2011) assessed the relationship between academic under advancement and self-concept using different sources of data, namely: California psychological inventory, the Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test, the Draw-a Person Test, the Gough Adjective Checklist, a personal data sheet, and a learner's essay entitled "what I was in 20 years". A combined rating of these instruments revealed a significant difference between achievers and underachievers, with the achievers being more adequate in the concept of themselves, Purkey concluded that there is a significant relationship between self-concept and performance in school.

Coppersmith (2017) opined that parents who use punishment and scold children instead of giving rewards produce children with negative perceptions of themselves. The basis of positive self-concept or negative self-concept, according to Ukpong (2010) is not so much that the self is good or bad, but rather its acceptance or its rejection that matters. A student with positive self concept is both stable and diversified

and less vulnerable to academic performance unlike the one with negative self concept. Sullivan (2010) maintained that a person's perception of self emerges from reflected appraisal of other people. When parents are lovely and comforting, the child develops positive feelings about himself. When the child enters school, the approval and disapproval of his teachers and peers become important in the establishment of his/her self concept. When a teacher criticizes and belittles his/her effort the students develops a sense of inferiority. This affects his attitude towards school work, study and this influences academic performance (Idika, 2014). Idika (2014) asserted that a student with negative self-concept doubts himself and such a person makes his failure certain by himself as he is the first person to be convinced of it.

The significance and positive relationship between a student's self-concept and academic performance has long been established by studies conducted by Essien (2014) as reported by Ukpong (2010). This study agreed that a positive perception of one's self is central when considering optimal scholastic performance. Ukpong (2010) also affirmed the position that individuals who feel uncomfortable about their abilities rarely succeed in school. Students who have developed negative academic self concept need extra assistance from parents and teachers so that they can experience feelings of success and develop confidence in their ability to learn, ignoring, humiliating or punishing less successful students make them give up. Child (2014) posited a significant positive relationship between academic self-concept and academic performance. Child discovered that student with negative self-concept most often perform poorly academically. Essien (2014) conducted a study to find out the relationship existing between students' academic self-concept and their academic performance in GSS 1101 use of English Language. The sample of study was four hundred (400) students from both public and private schools. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the generated data. The findings revealed that the higher students academic self-concept, the higher their academic performance. Essien (2014) posited that the intelligence quotient (IQ) of students who perform poorly academically are lower than the IQ of those that perform well in class. They observed that students developed positive or negative academic self concept based on their daily academic performance and appraisal of others.

Studies have revealed that a child's estimation of himself not only as a person but also as a student can have implication for his academic performance. In a massive study carried out by Essien (2014) 600,000 students were used. Coleman et al observed that of all the factors in school environment which affect students' academic ability self-concept showed a strongest relationship. They therefore, suggested that, since self-concept is the most important factor, in the educational performance, that changes are required in schools accordingly, to express teaching of students'. Burns (2010) in his study of 2,000 high school students supported the existence of positive relationship between self-concept and academic performance. Rubin (2010) in his own study reported that self-esteem are more closely related to academic performance for girls than boys. Based on their studies on self-concept and academic performance, Fontana (2010) quoted Emmanuel Kant (the German philosopher) who asserted that self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom therefore a student's self-image and aspiration, to a very great extent, affect his academic performance. Rubin (2010) maintained that children with high self-concept are more active and expressive in all they do. They enjoy participating in all school activities and are generally very successful academically and socially. He further contended that children with low self-concept are sad, isolated, fearful, reluctant, over self-conscious, over sensitive, to criticisms and they constantly underestimate themselves and thus tend to achieve less in class and other school works. Students with high self-concept generally show more performance effort than those with low self-concept, even though both groups have similar potentials of cognitive performance. Rubin (2010) carried out a study on high self-concept (internal) students and with low self-concept (external) students and academic performance. He stated that internally oriented students tend to be higher achievers than externally oriented students who depend on external influences for their success. He therefore concluded that internal orientation is associated with higher academic performance and greater participation in school work. Diggory (2010) also show that there is a significant relationship between self-concept and academic performance or performance. Those studies indicated that individuals who perceived themselves as being responsible for

their own performance (internal) tend to excel academically than those who distort realities by attributing their success or failure to forces outside their innate control.

Moreso, Diggory (2010)posited that the child's self concept is to a large extent a product of his or her experiences in his or her environment, namely; the home and parental identification, the school and the peer identification. A child develops a positive perception about himself in a home where parents are showing attention, encouragement, physical affection and democratic behaviour. When the child goes to school, the approval and disapproval of teachers and peers helps in shaping his self concept. When an attempt made by the student is criticized, the child develops a sense of inferiority which affects his attitude towards his studies and this negatively influences his academic performance. Good (2010) in his own study suggested that in a classroom, the proper nourishing and nurturing of the students' self-concept is of great importance for good and effective general performance. This in turn affects the teacher's expectation of students, which invariably affects the way the teacher deals with the students. He strongly maintained that self-concept is an important component in education because a lot of things an individual does depends on how he sees himself if he sees himself as one who is likely to achieve, he works harder for it, but if he discovers himself as one who is likely to fail, he becomes shy and withdrawn.

Similarly, Muller (2011) in his own study said that self-concept is a function of performance and motivation. He also opined that self-concept and performance motivation grow out of experiences and manifest themselves in competitions and comparisons. Competition on its own, places one in a position to understand oneself, discover one's position and aspiration to achieve, expect success, develop high goals and make efforts. One also receives feedback, which in turn helps one to discover one's self-concept and performance motivation. John (2010) in her own research maintained that the tendency to label children dull or intelligent is quite common. To her, what is so often overlooked is the effect such labeling has on students. She said that on many cases these students are aware of this categorization with the result that while the successful students feel proud - the not so successful ones develop a feeling of inferiority complex and cannot compete with others. Thus the feeling of self must be exercising some rewardable influence on not only the personality of the students but also his academic performance. Therefore, institutions that are responsible for fostering human personality and dignity should show interest in the directional effect of self personality and learning. Diggory (2010) posited that, the way a person sees himself in relation to others and the kind of fears he has are major factors in delineating the things he strives for. In addition, he maintained that feeling of alienation as manifested by under-achievers in school and diligence are accompanying problems of negative self-concept. On the other hand, Roberts (2010) maintained that anxiety is a powerful tool that can cripple learning in even the best progressive school. To him, self-concept is clearly and strongly related to performance. A positive self-concept is of tremendous importance for student's academic performance as well as for their personal growth and mental health. Kaur, Diggory (2010) carried out a study to investigate home environment and academic performance as correlates of self concept among adolescents in India. The study sample was made up of 300 adolescents of ninth class selected on the basis of randomized technique of sampling from different government and private schools of Patiala district of Punjab, India. The research was conducted through descriptive method of research. The research result revealed a positive, yet non-significant correlation of self-concept with academic performance.

In the same vein, Diggory (2010) found out that self concept was significantly and positively correlated to measures of performance in English and Mathematics. Muijis (2014) observed that academic self-concept and academic performance were strong predictors of one another. Burns (2010) in his study of 2,000 High school students supports the existence of positive relationship between self-concept and academic performance, Rubin (2012) in his own study reported that self-esteem are more closely related to academic performance for girls than boys.

A study carried out by Coppersmith (2017), found out that children with high self-concept consistently perform higher than those with low self-concept even though, intelligence may be parallel for both groups they as well observed that children with high self-concept set high goals for themselves, show less need for adult approval, are less deterred by failure and have a moral realistic view of their abilities. The result of studies by Malpass (2010) suggested that students' self-concept is related to academic performance.

The work of Malpass (2010) involving New York City eight grader are particularly interesting because they are comprehensive and involved self-concept of students and its relationship to academic performance in Physics and Biology. Malpass (2010) also asserted that the most important of an individual's expectation is his concern on the probability of his success and failure within a given situation for example academic proficiency. Thus a bright student in a small high school may have to expect consistent academic success with modest effort. When he is transferred to a quality college he finds out that his efforts produce marginal or even failing grades. He therefore changes his probability estimates in order to survive and this is accompanied by a realistic change in his academic self-concept. Regarding self-concept and anxiety, he further stressed that good self-concept accompanies low anxiety.

Socio-psychological studies by Lewis (2010) has shown how a person sees himself (his image) and the value he puts upon himself (his self-esteem) are a crucial determinant of the goals which an individual sets for himself, the attitudes he holds, the behaviour he initiates and the responses he makes to others. Coopersmith (2017) did a correlation study of positive and negative self-concept of students. He found that success and higher performance correlated highly and significantly with positive self-concept. Coopersmith then concluded that students with positive self-concept were found to be very hard working individually and in group. They were not usually alone, in short, they are not isolated unlike those with negative self-concept who were always found alone, and that they lack self-confidence and therefore cannot improve in their performance.

In the same vein, Okoye (2010) reported that self-concept accounted for 80% of school performance since it is self-concept that initiates responses individuals make. He therefore maintained that self-concept of academic ability focuses attention specifically upon the self in the context of school and learning. Furthermore, Okoye (2010) made it clear that positive self-concept in the classroom was significantly correlated with academic performance (r=38), indicating that a child who has a positive self-concept performs better than the one who has a negative self-concept. Investigating the academic performance of those students with positive self-concept, Okoye (2010) reported that those with positive self-concept perform better than those with negative self-concept in English, Mathematics and science. Two explanations were offered for these findings. These are that those with positive self-concept enjoy or benefit more from their social position and their awareness energizes their self-concept and their mental health, thereby making them to approach their academic tasks with more confidence and vigor, which, in turn, leads to superior academic performance. The second explanation he gave is that the positive self-concept students have more friends than the negative self-concept student. This gives them more opportunity to actually work and solve their academic problems which enhance their performance.

Perhaps, it may be enlightening to cite some relevant studies about gender differences in learning performances and self-concepts of Nigerian children. While Okoye (2010) using Nigeria secondary school students, found inconsistent results as regards gender differences in self-concept in Mathematics and English Language performance, Okoye's (2010) studies in the same area using primary school pupils found no significant difference in the performance in Mathematics and English Language of boys and girls. Okoye asserted that the individuals cognitive development is dependent upon specific experiences which are motivated by self-concept. Therefore Bloom opined that, a child's cognitive development is enhanced by his/her self-concept. Furthermore, he said that the child's experiences and or self-concept and their result of interaction with things, situation and people affect cognitive abilities of the child.

Furthermore, Essien (2014) conducted a study to find out the influence of self-concept on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in South-South Geo-Political Zone. In this study seven students' characteristics were used, among which were performance motivation, self concept, attitude, ability, perception study habit and test anxiety. A sample of 600 SS II students were used for the study. The data were analyzed using a stepwise multiple regression and One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). It was found out that four out of the seven variables used showed significant influence on the dependant variable which was academic performance. One of the variables that showed significant relationship was self-concept of students towards academic performance. In this same study, the result of the Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis showed that self-concept was one of the four variables (others being ability perception and performance motivation) that showed significant influence on the combined

contribution to the prediction of students' Mathematics performance. Essien (2014) who tested the causal ordering of academic self-concept and academic performance with four waves of data (last 3 years of high school and one year after graduation) from a large, nationally representative American Sample of boys, found some support for a reciprocal effects model in which prior academic self-concept affected subsequent performance and prior performance affected subsequent self-concept.

Social Self Concept and University freshmen's academic performance: The perceptions one has of his/her self are in terms of personal attributes and the various roles which are played or fulfilled by individual. Examples, children may participate in social settings as sons and daughters, as peer group, siblings, students and others with each role, the individual receives and internalizes feedback about nature and quality of his or her function. Thus, a person may develop a perception of self concept which may range from simple role definition to a sense of quality role performance. In the light of this a child may perceive self as unsuccessful student or as a good playmate. Essien (2014) carried out a series of studies base on discrepancy model of underachiever, which points to social differences between underachievers and achievers.

According to Essien, the way hearing impaired children perceive themselves is largely determined by the way the significant others perceive them and these significant others include their parent, teachers and peer group. The students have suffered serious discrimination by the society in a variety of ways. So many occasions the hearing impaired are confronted with situation of non-acceptance prejudices, deviation, disintegration and segregation and by so doing the victims of self concept is reduced. Behaviuor of parents towards their children can affect their social self concept. To Ukpong (2010) he asserts that there is a reciprocal relationship between social self concept and academic performance of the students. Ukpong (2010) opined that social self concept includes individual perceptions of himself as social being, a certain kind of person, as having a certain traits, habits, characteristics pattern of behaviour as possessing certain abilities, skills, knowledge as holding various beliefs, values, attitudes, as being directed towards certain goals, aims and aspirations. In other words, the students perceive him in the way he is related to his surroundings. What object he possesses, what social groups he belongs to, what his social status and roles are, how he interacts with significant others. He further found that social self concept was related to good adjustment. This finding showed that right adjustment to peers is made by adolescents with high self-concept.

More so, Ukpong (2010) observed that how a person sees himself, his self image and the value he places upon himself (his self esteem) are crucial determinants of the goals an individual sets for himself, that is, the attitudes he holds, the behaviour he initiates and the responses he makes to others; the home is the major determinant of self concept even the school has influence too. Therefore it is necessary for the teacher to determine the social self concept of his hearing impaired students immediately the teacher comes in contact with the student.

Physical Self Concept and University freshmen's academic performance: This implies the individual's presentation of the view of his body, state of health, physical appearances, skills and sexuality. It has to do with an individual's perception of his handsomeness, beauty, height, physique and well made. Psychologists and laymen commonly use the word personality, the laymen see it as the exhibition of the outer characteristics of the fellow man. However, among psychologists too, there are so many definitions. There is presently no generally agreed upon single definition of personality. Nonetheless, most theoretical definitions view personality as an individual difference concept as a hypothetical structure, as a lifelong developmental process and as an entity accounting for consistent patterns of behaviour. The physical self concept consists of the characteristic behaviour patterns, attitudes, motives, tendencies, outlooks and emotional responses with which an individual reacts to others and to the environment. The physical image of somebody is not just individuality but it is the consistency of individuality. Ukpong (2010) posit that a student's physical position was related to his academic performance and that both his physical and academic positions in the classroom has a relationship with his mental health, that is, his attitudes towards himself (self concept) his actualization of his potentials and his perception of reality.

Also, Child (2014) asserts that the physical self image is referred to the mask used by actors performing until the mask was unveiled by the actor for his features to show. The mask illustrates the complexity and difficulties the students have, which involves penetrating and understanding an individual until he or she unveils the mask. He also added that in the modern sense, personality is sometimes associated with popularity and it implies that a person who is popular, sociable, persuasive, handsome and well built has a wonderful personality. According to Usoro (2017) as students who perceive themselves as being well liked interact more with classmates, they make use of their academic ability and consequently do well academically while those who perceive themselves as being not well liked interact less with classmates, in that case, make less use of their academic ability and consequently perform poorly academically. He identifies the restriction placed upon the handicap in economic and moral spheres by many societies and chief source of inferiority feeling prevalent among the handicaps he feels that inferiority will continue to be high if the handicaps are not given a chance to prove their worth.

Statement of the problem

As freshmen the expectations of the parents and the lecturers are that they are supposed to do very well in their academic work, including General Studies and Communication Skills GSS courses. Regrettably, the scores of students' in the use of English have been very discouraging. This thus underscores the need for a study of this nature to address factors that could better explain this situation. Since the home and school environment, as well as self concept plays a crucial role in students academic performance, there is need for a study to explain performance from the perspective of the home and school environment; and also self concept. It is against this background therefore, that this study seeks to examine the influence of self-concept on the academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the influence of self-concept on the academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt. Specifically the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain how academic self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt
2. Examine how social self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt
3. Determine how physical self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt

Research questions

The under-listed research questions were generated to guide the study.

1. How does academic self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt
2. How does social self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt
3. How does physical self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide and direct the study.

1. There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on how academic self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt
2. There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on how social self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt
3. There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on how physical self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in conducting this study was the survey design. According to Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri (2014), the essence of a survey design is to make inferences about the population under study using the sample drawn from that population. The study adopted the survey design because the researcher only made use of a representative sample of the population from where generalizations of the study results were made. Also this method is preferred because of its descriptive nature, as it involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe existing phenomena. The population of this study was all the freshmen in Faculty of Humanities, University Port Harcourt in 2021/2022 academic session with a population size of 700 students. The sampling techniques adopted for this study was a combination of stratified, purposive and accidental sampling techniques with a sample size of 350 students which is 50% of the total population. The research instruments utilized in this study was self structured questionnaire. The instrument was divided into two sections A and B. Section. After collecting the questionnaire, codes/scores were assigned to each item. For ease of data preparation, a coding schedule was prepared by developing a key for each of the constructs in the instruments in a tabular form. The scores of the students that participated in responding to the questionnaire were extracted. The students academic performance scores were summed together and the average scores at every sub-variable level were determined. Any student that scored below the mean score was adjudged as being low or poor while a score of the mean and above was adjudged as being high or rich. The score used here was the students' responses on the independent sub-variables. Based on this dichotomy, the scores of each of the two groups above were compared using two sample t-test analyses.

RESULTS

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on how academic self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt.

Independent t-test analysis of the difference between the mean academic performance of university freshmen with low academic self-concept and high academic self-concept.

Variables	N	X	SD	t-cal
Male Students	150	2.89	0.85	1.83
Female Students	200	2.95	0.86	

$p > .05$; df = 350; critical t = 1.96

The analysis on table 1 above showed that the calculated t-value of 1.83 was found to be less than the critical t-value of 1.96 when tested at 0:05 level of significance with 350 degrees of freedom. This result is significant implying that there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on how academic self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on how social self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt.

Independent t-test analysis of the difference between the mean academic performance of university freshmen with low social self-concept and high social self-concept

Variables	N	X	SD	t-cal
Male Students	150	2.86	0.83	1.29
Female Students	200	2.91	0.85	

$p > .05$; df = 350; critical t = 1.96

The analysis on table 2 above showed that the calculated t-value of 1.29 was found to be less than the critical t-value of 1.960 when tested at 0:05 level of significance with 350 degrees of freedom. This result is significant implying that there is a significant difference in the mean academic performance of

Freshmen with low social self-concept and high social self-concept. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was retained.

Hypothesis three: There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on how physical self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt.

Independent t-test analysis to determine the difference between the mean academic performance of university freshmen with low physical self-concept and high physical self-concept

Variables	N	X	SD	t-cal
Male Students	150	2.83	0.84	1.86
Female Students	200	2.94	0.86	

$p > .05$; df = 350; critical t = 1.96

The analysis on table 13 above showed that the calculated t-value of 1.86 was found to be less than the critical t-value of 1.96 when tested at 0.05 level of significance with 350 degrees of freedom. This result is significant implying that there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on how physical self-concept influence academic performance of University freshmen students in University Port Harcourt. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section is devoted to the discussion of findings of the hypotheses formulated to direct the study. This discussion was done hypothesis by hypothesis.

Academic self-concept and University freshmen's academic performance

The findings of this study showed that there is no significant difference between the mean academic performance of university freshmen with low academic self concept and high academic self concept. This can be interpreted to mean that students with high academic self-concept trust themselves and their abilities to perform well academically, than those with low academic self-concept who view themselves and their mental abilities negatively. The result of the analysis is in agreement with the study of Ukpong (2010) who opined that man responds selectively to external stimuli and interprets them symbolically with reference to self. Self concept is known to be the complex and dynamic system of beliefs which one holds true about himself or herself. It is a process and is continually developing and changing. Ukpong (2010) also opined that a close relationship exists between the functioning of the mind (rational thought) and the self. It is assumed that an individual is a rational thinking being who can reason, understand and anticipate future consequences. Thus, one's self-concept develops in the course of taking attitude of others in general. The author further stressed that the self cannot be understood apart from the functioning of the mind. One of the important manifestations of these rational abilities is self-consciousness.

In the same vein, Coppersmith (2017) affirm that parents who use punishment and scold children instead of giving rewards produce children with negative perceptions of themselves. The basis of positive self-concept or negative self-concept, according to Ukpong (2010) is not so much that the self is good or bad, but rather its acceptance or its rejection that matters. A student with positive self concept is both stable and diversified and less vulnerable to academic performance unlike the one with negative self concept. The result also agreed with Sullivan (2010) who observed that a person's perception of self emerges from reflected appraisal of other people. When parents are lovely and comforting, the child develops positive feelings about himself. When the child enters school, the approval and disapproval of his teachers and peers become important in the establishment of his/her self concept. When a teacher criticizes and belittles his/her effort the students develops a sense of inferiority. Diggory (2010) also in line with the study asserted that failure in activities that are important and highly rated lowers one's self evaluation in other seemingly related abilities. Conversely, success as an important and highly rated task raises the self evaluation in other abilities. Diggory (2010) also asserted that a positive academic self-concept is beneficial, especially for motivating learners to improve their academic performance.

Social self-concept and University freshmen's academic performance
The findings of the study showed that there is significant difference between the mean academic performance of university freshmen with low social self concept and high social self concept. This can be attributed to the fact that social self-concept is related to good adjustment, then implies that right adjustment to lecturers and peers is done by students with high social self-concept as this also enhance their academic performance. The result of this findings is in consonance with Diggory (2010) who observed that social self concept includes individual perceptions of himself as social being, a certain kind of person, as having a certain traits, habits, characteristics pattern of behaviour as possessing certain abilities, skills, knowledge as holding various beliefs, values, attitudes, as being directed towards certain goals, aims and aspirations. In other word, the students perceives himself in the way he is related to his surroundings. What object he possesses, what social groups he belongs to what his social status and role are, how he interacts with significant others. In support of this result, Combs and Davies (2010) observed that how a person sees himself, his self image and the value he places upon himself (his self esteem) are crucial determinants of the goals an individual sets for himself, that is, the attitudes he holds, the behaviour he initiates and the responses he makes to others; the home is the major determinant of self concept even the school has influence too. Therefore it is necessary for the teacher to determine the social self concept of his hearing impaired students immediately the teacher comes in contact with the student.

Physical self-concept and University freshmen's academic performance.
The findings of this study revealed that there is significant difference between the mean academic performance of university freshmen with low physical self concept and high physical self concept. This can be interpreted to mean that a student's physical position is related to his or her academic performance, hence the students with high physical self-concept, tend to make use of their academic abilities and consequently do well academically. The result of this hypothesis is supported by Diggory (2010) when they asserted that student's physical position was related to his academic performance and that both his physical and academic positions in the classroom has a relationship with his mental health, that is, his attitudes towards himself (self concept) his actualization of his potential and his perception of reality. This result also corroborate Mercer (2014) who asserted that the physical self image which refers to the mask used by actors performing until the mask was unveiled by the actor for his features to show. The mask illustrates the complexity and difficulties the students have, which involves in penetrating and understanding an individual until he or she unveils the mask. He also added that in the modern sense, personality is sometimes associated with popularity and implies that a person who is popular, sociable, persuasive, handsome and well built has a wonderful personality.

The result equally agreed with Diggory (2010) who ascertained that students who perceive themselves as being well liked interact more with classmates, they make use of their academic ability and consequently do well academically while those who perceive themselves as being not well liked interact less with classmates, in that case, make less use of their academic ability and consequently perform poorly academically. The author further observed that the restriction placed upon the handicap in economic and moral spheres by many societies are chief source of inferiority feeling prevalent among the handicaps he feels that inferiority will continue to be high if the handicaps are not given a chance to prove their worth.

CONCLUSION
Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that self-concept is significant predictors of University freshmen's academic performance. It was also concluded that. From the findings, it was concluded that academic self-concept (low academic self-concept and high academic self-concept), low social self-concept and high social self-concept and low physical self-concept and high physical self-concept has great impact on University freshmen's academic performance. Furthermore, since educational facilities play fundamental role in improving the educational outcomes of students, it is therefore, strongly recommended that university administration should provide adequate educational facilities for the students to enhance their academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents and lecturers should show love and empathy in their dealings with the children or students. This will help them develop positive feelings about themselves and positive academic self-concept. This will in turn enhance their academic performance.
2. Lecturers and parents should help the students to build up their social self-concept, since students with high social self-concept perform better than their counterparts with low social self-concept academically.
3. Lecturers and parents should help the students build up a physical positive self-concept that will help them cope with the deficiencies in them to enhance their academic performance.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

The findings of this study have some educational implications and as such contributed to knowledge. The researcher believes that the state government, ministry of education or school management needs to ponder and reflect on the findings of the study. The study has identified some factors that would serve as checks and solutions to academic performance. There are also some negative implications drawn out from the findings of the study for the study. The findings of this study have far reaching implications for parents, teachers, counsellors, government and students. Since the academic performance of students can be traced to self concepts. It is imperative that parents should always provide their children with good training. Teachers in the school should always have a good behavioural disposition that will encourage students positively in the learning process and also make teaching and learning interesting activities as this will encourage high performance among students.

Counsellors in the discharge of their professional duties in schools should always be pro-active in identifying students with various problems that may affect their behaviour and performance. Government on the other hand should help in improving the standard of education across the nation as this will give rise to students' good behaviour and high academic achievement. And the students should also have positive attitude or disposition in terms of their educational activities irrespective of their family types or structure as it will greatly propel them in acquiring knowledge and skills in the school. The counselor, using-client centered therapy and rational emotive behavioural therapy explains thus:

In client-centered therapy, the client determines the course and direction of treatment, while the therapist clarifies the client's responses to promote self-understanding. The goals of client-centered therapy are increased self-esteem and openness to experience. Client-centered therapists work to help clients lead full lives of self-understanding and reduce defensiveness, guilt, and insecurity. As well as have more positive and comfortable relationships with others.

Client-centered therapy was developed in the 1930s by the American Psychologist Carl Roger who was a humanistic psychologist who believed that how we live in the here-and-now and our current perceptions are more important than the past. He also believed close personal relationship with a supportive environment of warmth, genuineness, and understanding, are key for therapeutic change.

Another counseling technique that is more appropriate is the Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT). This was developed by Albert Ellis in 1955. It is built on the idea that how we feel is largely influenced by how we think. As is implied by the name, this form of therapy encourages the development of rational thinking to facilitate healthy emotional expression and behaviour. Often, was of thinking ingrained in our brains at an early age or resulting from painful or traumatic events continued to subconsciously influence our behaviours and perceptions into adulthood. Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy seeks to reshape these core beliefs in those experiencing a wide range of mental health conditions, thereby enabling them to live full, satisfying lives free from unnecessary psychological distress.

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