Self Esteem Among Private and Public Secondary Schools Students in Rivers State: Implications for Counseling

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Abstract

The study investigated self-esteem among private and public secondary school students in Rivers State. The study used simple random sampling method to select 200 SS1 students from 3 private and 3 public schools, all in Port Harcourt municipality. The "Students Self Esteem Scale" (SSES) was use for collection of data for the study. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Reliability coefficient of 0.78 obtained. The t-test statistics was used to test two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Null hypotheses one and two were rejected, meaning that private school students, both male and female demonstrated high self-esteem, while public schools students demonstrated low self-esteem. Based on the findings of the study, four recommendations were made for effective implementations.

Keywords: Self-esteem; Private school; Public school; Rivers state

Introduction

The concept self-esteem has been a common household word. The word self-esteem cut across all age brackets, starting from infants to late adulthood. Who am I? What is my worth in life? What is my identity? What do I want to achieve? These are latent thought processes in humans. Therefore, self-esteem is the totality of one's self evaluation. It is a cognitive process of evaluating one's abilities, values, knowledge and overall capacity. Coles [1] described identity as the individual attempt to define himself or herself as a unique person. People who are perceived with positive self-esteem demonstrated the following signs: confidence, self-direction, non-blaming others, demonstrates personal strength, optimism, ability to solve problems and ability to control emotions.

Hutton [2] investigated the self-esteem of 36 adolescent girls in a junior high school, age 13-15 years. Findings indicated that:

a. Social self-esteem girls' perception of the quality of their relationships with peers was found to have significantly increased.

b. Academic self-esteem-girls' perception of their ability to succeed academically decreased slightly for the experimental group.

c. Parental self-esteem-girls' perceptions of how their parents view them slightly increase for the experimental group.

d. General self-esteem-girls overall perceptions of their worth was found to have significantly increased for the experimental control group.

Similarly, Farid and Akhar [3] studied the self-esteem of 396 students of 10th class from Mianwahi district, Bahawalnagar, Pakistan. The sample comprised of 224 female and 172 male students. The following findings were reported:

a. Gender difference was found in the self-esteem level of students,

b. Boys showed higher self-esteem level than girls.

c. The urban students showed higher self-esteem level than those of rural students.

In addition, Singh and Gunjan [4] investigated self-esteem of 175 secondary school students in Jagadhri, Haryana, using their family environment. The findings included that:

a. Positive and significant relationship existed between self-esteem of students and family environment.

b. There was no significant relationship between self-esteem of children and their socio economic status. It was reported that children experiencing higher family interaction are found to have higher self-esteem than those experiencing lower family interaction.

Also, Colquhoun and Bourme [5] investigated self-esteem and academic performance of 4th graders in elementary school, Andrew Jamaica, concluded in their findings that there is a positive correlation between self-esteem and academic performance. Boys had a lower self-esteem than female counterparts. Similarly, Ngesu [6] investigated self-esteem and academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa district, Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that:

a. Some 58.33% of the students performed well felt proud of their performance and always felt like showing to other students in the class.

b. More boys 50% than girls 48.7% aspired to complete degree program.

c. Nearly all the students felt proud of their teachers who they felt made them perform well. However, the researcher recommended that research is further needed to investigate self-esteem among private school students.

Furthermore, Harter [7] investigated academic achievement and self-concept of secondary school students in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, concluded that academic achievement and self-concept time

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were discovered to be gender sensitive. Male students had greater play outside school, while female students were always engaged in domestic work.

Olea et al. [8] investigated self-esteem of 33 freshmen Bsc. Biology major in Biotechnology students of the college of Arts and Science Technological University, Mandaluyong City, Philippians, concluded that both the male and female showed positive perception of their self-esteem. However, the perceived self-esteem of both male and female respondents showed a lower correlation with their academic performance. Similarly, Aryana [9] studied the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement amongst pre-university students. The study used 50 male and 50 female pre-university students. The study revealed that there was significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic development. Also, there was significant difference in academic achievement between boys and girls.

Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been carried out by eminent scholars in the area of self-esteem among primary, secondary and university levels. Most of these studies focused on public schools in conducting their studies, and leaving out the private secondary schools mostly in Rivers State Nigeria. The self-esteem of private secondary school students are equally important as the public students. Ngesu [6] in his study recommended that there is great need to study self-esteem of students attending private secondary schools to balance the research equation in self-esteem. Therefore, this researcher is interested to investigate self-esteem among public and private secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to compare SS1 students self-evaluation of their self-concept (self-esteem) in both public and private secondary schools in Rivets State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

a. What is the perception of SS1 male students self-esteem in private and public secondary schools students in Rivers State.

b. What is the perception of SS1 female students' self-esteem in private and public secondary schools students in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

For the purpose of answering the above research questions, the following null hypotheses were advanced at 0.05 significance level.

Ho_1: There is no significance difference in self-esteem between SSI male students in private and public secondary schools.

Ho_2: There is no significance difference in self-esteem between SSI female students in private and public secondary schools.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The area of study was Port Harcourt Local Government, Rivers State, Nigeria. Six (6) secondary schools were selected (3 public and 3 private) all in Port Harcourt municipality. Simple random sampling technique was utilized to select 200 SS1 students from the six (6) secondary schools. The instrument used for data collection was developed by the researcher.

The instrument for the study was a 9 – item, four point rating scales of strongly Agree (4 points) Agree (3 points) disagree (2 points) and strongly disagree (1 point). Mean scores of 2.50 and above were

accepted high self-esteem, while scores below 2.50 were seen as low self-esteem.

The questionnaire of the instrument was titled "Students Self Esteem Scale" (SSES). The instrument was subjected to content and face validity by experts in the area of measurement and evaluation in the faculty of Education. Test-Retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient 0.78 was obtained.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the perception of SS1 male students' self-esteem in private and public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 1 revealed that private schools male students scored above 2.50 in all items, indicting high self-esteem while public school male students scored 2.50 in item 7 and 8. Public school male students demonstrated low self-esteem as measured by "**SSES**".

Research Question 2

What is the perception of SS1 female students' self-esteem in private and public secondary schools?

Table 2 revealed that private schools female students scored above 2.50 in all items, while public school female scored below 2.50 except item 7 and 3. Female students in private schools demonstrated high self-esteem.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in self-esteem between SS1 male students in private and public secondary schools. The result is shown in Table 3.

The data in Table 3 revealed that the calculated t-test value of private schools, male students and public schools, male students' self-esteem was 2.70, which was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 98 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis one was not accepted, hence there is a significant difference in self-esteem level between private schools male students and that of public schools male students. The mean scores of private school (3.6) are greater than the score of public school students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in self-esteem between SS1 female students in private and public secondary schools.

The data in Table 4 revealed that the calculated t-test value of private school female students and public school, female students' self-esteem was 2.65, which was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 98 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis two (2) was not accepted, hence there is a significant difference in self-esteem level between private schools female students and that of public schools female students. The mean scores of private school (3.5) are greater than the score of public school students.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that private schools male students scored above 2.50 in all items, indicating high self-esteem, while public schools males students scored 2.50 in item 7 and 8 only. Their overall average (X) was 2.32, which was below 2.50, demonstrating low self-esteem. Furthermore, private schools female students scored above 2.50 in all items, while public schools female students scored below 2.50, except item 7 and 3. Female students in private schools demonstrated high self-esteem, with X score of 3.5. Also, the findings further revealed that significant difference exist between private and public secondary schools male HO_1, was rejected meaning that private

S/No	Items indicators higher self-esteem among stand	Male Students	
		Private X_1	Public X_2
1.	I feel I can influence other students opinion positively	3.60	2.30
2.	I have control over my emotion	3.62	2.35
3.	I manage situations in a positive and confident manner	3.66	2.35
4.	I have high level of frustration tolerance	3.00	2.43
5.	I have capacity to accept responsibility	3.00	2.30
6.	I keep my behavior in proper perspective	3.00	2.30
7.	I communicate positive feeling about myself and others	4.00	2.50
8.	I maintain internal locus of my life	4.00	2.50
9.	I maintain above average performance in all my classes	4.00	2.30

Note: X_1 = Private school male students, X_2 = Public school male students.

Table 1: Mean scores of male students' self-esteem in private and public schools.

S/No	Items indicators higher self-esteem among stand	Female students	
		Private X_1	Public X_2
1.	I feel I can influence other students opinion positively	3.58	2.35
2.	I have control over my emotion	3.60	2.10
3.	I manage situations in a positive and confident manner	3.70	2.50
4.	I have high level of frustration tolerance	3.60	2.40
5.	I have capacity to accept responsibility	3.00	2.30
6.	I keep my behavior in proper perspective	3.15	2.30
7.	I communicate positive feeling about myself and others	4.00	2.50
8.	I maintain internal locus of my life	4.00	2.45
9.	I maintain above average performance in all my classes	4.00	2.35

Note: X_1 = Private school female. X_2 = Public school female.

Table 2: Mean scores of female students' self-esteem in private and public schools.

Variables	N	X	STD	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male (private)	50	3.6	0.43	98	0.05	2.70	1.96	Sig
Male (public schools)	50	2.35	0.45					

Table 3: t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of self-esteem of SS1 male students in private and public secondary schools.

Variables	N	X	STD	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
female (private)	50	3.5	0.44	98	0.05	2.65	1.96	Sig
female (public schools)	50	2.32	0.45					

Table 4: t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of self-esteem of SS1 female students in private and public secondary schools.

school male students demonstrated high self-esteem, while public schools male students demonstrated low self-esteem. Similarly, Ho_2 was rejected, meaning that, there is a significant difference in self-esteem level between private schools female students and that of public school female students, showing that private school female students demonstrated high self-esteem.

The design of the study did not include variables, such as family environment, socio-economic factors of the parents or guardians and academic performance. The low self-esteem demonstrated by students from public schools could be as a result of socio-economic factors, of the students' family background and environment. In view of the above mentioned factors, an interview was conducted with a former secretary of All Nigeria Confederation of Principals of Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Mr. Derefaka Dakoru, who was the former secretary was asked to give his opinion on self-esteem level of private and public schools students in Rivers State. He responded by saying:

"From my years of experience as a teacher, and Principal or 35 years, I would say that self-esteem of students in private schools could be rated higher than those of their counterparts in public schools. My reasons are simple: Public schools are managed by government, and are not well organized in terms of infrastructural development, poor learning environment, over congested classrooms, and the school buildings could be regarded as "motor parks". Some of the students are from very low income households. Some of the students serve as housekeepers to relatives and others. Therefore, they demonstrate low self-esteem, compared to their fellow's students in private settings".

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this investigation, the researcher has formulated two conclusions. They are as follows:

a. There is a significant difference in self-esteem level between private schools male students and that of the public schools male students. Private schools male student demonstrated high level of self-esteem, while public school, male student demonstrated low level of self-esteem.

b. There is a significant difference in self-esteem level between private schools female students and that of the public schools female students. Private schools female student demonstrated high level of self-esteem, while public schools female students demonstrated low self-esteem.

Implications for Counseling

Counselors should help clients make good adjustment, modify maladaptive behavior, learning productive responses. To establish and achieve specific concrete goals and sub-goals in life with self and others. Counselors should assist students to become psychologically strong and rational. To be able to take responsibility, clarify goals. Students shall be able to formulate a realistic plan, focus on behavior as to eliminate punishment and excuses.

Counselors should be able to help students live more rational and productive lives. Stop thinking irrationally and self-defeating habits. Be able to lead self-exploration – openness to self and others. To gain confidence, self-direction, non-blaming behavior, awareness of personal strengths, independent and cooperative attitude. To feel comfortable with a wide range of emotions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented for implementation:

a. Government should build quality and safe school building with modern learning facilities.

b. Government should monitor students in public schools engaging in "house girls and house boys" services all over the state.

c. Government should financially support students from poor socio economic backgrounds.

d. Government should encourage reading culture by establishing libraries with e-learning.

e. Government should establish guidance and counseling centers in all state own secondary schools in Rivers State.

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