

Self-Esteem and its impact on School Attendance

Alfred Dorgbetor

Akatsi College of Education, Ghana

ABSTRACT

Many factors contribute to a child's attendance at school. Regular school attendance is required for academic success. Academic achievement does not happen by accident; it is heavily dependent on one's attendance at school. The study looked at how students' self-esteem affected their school attendance in Junior High School (JHS) in Ghana. It was a descriptive survey of 340 JHS students to assess their self-esteem level, and it had an impact on their attendance at school. A crosstabulation revealed that students with high self-esteem attend school more frequently than those with moderate or low self-esteem.

KEYWORDS: School attendance, Self-esteem, school achievement, absenteeism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Regular school attendance is a critical factor in academic achievement. Every parent wishes for their children to succeed in school. The child's attitude toward school can be either negative or positive. The child's ability to be regular or irregular in his or her school attendance will be heavily influenced by how motivated the child is. Depending on what motivates the child, his or her motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic.

Internal motivation, according to Grolnick and Farkas (2002), is self-regulated. Self-esteem is the evaluative aspect of self-concept that corresponds to an overall view of one's own worthiness or unworthiness. Coppersmith (cited in Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). (Cited in Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). It is a great human need that contributes significantly to the life process; it is essential to the normal and healthy development of the individual (Branden, 1992)

Statement of the problem

Continuously, School Performance and Appraisal Meetings (SPAM) from 2009 to 2012 in the Sefwi – Wiawso Municipality pointed to absenteeism and parental irresponsibility as the main contributors to students' poor academic performance. Though some parents indicated that they help their children in their school assignments after school, the question that remains unanswered is the nature and form this assistance takes. This assistance given by these parents mostly end with the usual insults and the accusation of the lack of seriousness on the part of the child instead of giving the child the needed moral support and encouragement. The contribution of children in these meetings clearly indicate how emotionally detached some parents are with their children. Headmasters' reactions to some of the issues relating to absenteeism also point to the lack of parental support of both the child's material as well as emotional needs.

Also, Annual Reports of 2011 and 2012 from circuit supervisors in the municipality continuously highlight absenteeism and students' lack of interest in education as reasons for poor academic performance. This lack of interest, according to these supervisors, stems from the fact that some of the students do not see any prospect in their academic pursuits. The guidance and counselling unit has been inundated with copious reports for possible guidance and counselling interventions.

This research is therefore to assess how the poor attitude by both the home and school affect the self-esteem of student in relation their attendance to school.

Purpose of the study

The study investigated the relationship between the child's self-esteem and school attendance of Junior High school students in the Sefwi-Wiawso Municipality.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between self-esteem and school attendance?
2. How does self-esteem affect school attendance?

2. METHOD

The study used a cross-sectional approach to follow the quantitative model of a correctional design. This method is preferred over others because it allows for the indirect measurement of the nature and rate of change in the physical and intellectual development of children drawn from a representative age group (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A single ‘snapshot’ of a cross-sectional study provides data for either a retrospective or prospective investigation. The correlation design enables the analysis of data from a cross-sectional survey. The disadvantage of this design is that it does not tell me anything about the causal relationships between the variables. Correlational data cannot be used to prove that one variable caused another (Ofori & Dampson, 2011).

3. POPULATION

The study covered all public Junior high schools (JHS) in the Sefwi - Wiawso Municipality of the Western region of Ghana. A total population of 6,476 can be found in the 50 public JHS in the Municipality for the 2014/2015 academic years. This consisted of 3,443 male and 3,033 female. The target population for the study was the final year JHS students in public JHS schools in the Municipality. The total population of final year JHS student for the 2014/2015 academic year was 1,736 (Sefwi -Wiawso Municipal Education Directorate, 2013)

Sample and Sampling Procedure

In consonance with Krejcie and Morgan (as cited in Cohen et al. 2007), a total sample size of 340 was drawn from the population of 1,736 (representing the population of final year JHS students in the Municipality for 2014/2015) using the table of random samples. This sample took into consideration a confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 5%. This agrees with educational research.

4. INSTRUMENT

School attendance was measured using children’s School Attendance Register (SAR). The number of attendance or absence from school was taken from their school attendance for the first term of 2014/15 academic year. This was so because data for this study was collected between January and February 2014 which was within the second term of the academic year of 2014/15 but because the term was not ended at that time, I decided to use the previous term’s attendance.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was the analytical tool (SPSS) used to analyze data on the relationships between school attendance and self – esteem (research question 8). According to Ofori and Dampson (2011), correlation can be used to measure the strength and direction of an association between two variables. A crosstabulation of self-esteem and school attendance was constructed (contingency table) to further bring out the relationship between the two variables.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research question sought to establish the relationship, the strength of the relation, and the direction of the relationship, if any at all, between self - esteem and school attendance of the present sample.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Measures of Self-Esteem and school attendance

		Total self –esteem	School attendance
self esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	.831**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	340	340

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field data (2021)

The relationship between self - esteem and school attendance was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r). Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was a strong positive correlation between the two variables; self - esteem and school attendance, (r = .831, n = 340, p < .0001) with high level of self - esteem associated with high levels of school attendance of the present sample. In effect, the two variables share a respectable variance (.831 * .831 = .69) of 69%. This indicates that self - esteem explains 69% of the variance in respondents' scores on school attendance. Table 1 shows a crosstabulation between school attendance and self - esteem. It can be seen from the table that out of a total of 120 respondents who score 52 or less in their school attendance in the term under review, only one respondent scored 16 and above on self-esteem which indicates high level of self - esteem. Twenty (20) respondents scored 12 – 15 (Table 2) classified as moderate self - esteem with and total of 99 respondents scoring below 15 which is classified as low in self - esteem measures, showing support for the high correlation (r = .831) between school attendance and self - esteem. Respondents scoring 53- 58 (Table 2) in school attendance had only 11 scoring low on self - esteem, 93 scoring moderately on self - esteem, and 6 scoring high on self - esteem. The same can be said about respondents who scored above 59 (Table 2) on school attendance. Under this category of respondents, only 4 respondents scored 4 on low self - esteem, 9 scored moderate on self - esteem, while 97 had scores above 16 on self - esteem classified as high self - esteem. The current results prove the fact that school attendance and self - esteem are not just highly correlated but also positively correlated; in that as self - esteem increases, school attendance also increases. The crosstabulation results are also consistent with the Pearson's correlation coefficient (r).

Table 2: Crosstabulation of the Relationship between School Attend and Self Esteem

Count		Total self -esteem			Total
		≥ 11	12 - 15	16+	
Total school	≥52	99	20	1	120
attendance	53 – 58	11	93	6	110
	59+	4	9	97	110
Total		114	122	104	340

Source: field data (2021)

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

High self-esteem and regular school attendance have enormous benefits. The development or improvement of prevention and intervention strategies for the two variables is directly dependent on research on the antecedents and correlates of self-esteem and school attendance. Intervention strategies that are "theory-driven" are more likely to be successful. That is, interventions must be based on solid research into which processes are responsible for any changes in behaviour following an intervention. As a result, the findings of the current study have implications for school attendance prevention and intervention policies.

Counselors would also need to develop programs to help students with their self-esteem. This is because the high correlation between self-esteem and school attendance is a clear indication that self-esteem does, in fact, play a central role in the whole school absenteeism business. The meta-analysis also shows that self-esteem has a strong relationship with academic performance. Any intervention aimed at addressing students' self-esteem needs would be extremely beneficial.

8. CONCLUSION

According to the present study, self-esteem is seen as a crucial element in school attendance. If students' attendance at school is poor, it will have an impact on their academic performance because they will miss lessons. Management in education is thus challenged to take immediate steps to boost students' self-esteem if a positive educational outcome is desired.

REFERENCES

1. Branden, N. (1992). *The power of self – esteem: An inspiring look at our most important psychological resource*. Florida: Health Communications, Inc
2. Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in Education* (6thed.). London and New York: Routledge Falmer
3. Grolnick, W. S., & Farkas, M. (2002). Parenting and the development of children's self regulation. In M., H., Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting, Vol. 5: Practical issues in parenting* (pp 89 - 110). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

4. Heatherton, T. F., & Wyland, C. L. (2003). *Assessing self-esteem*. Retrieved on February 22, 2013 from www.dartmouth.edu/~thlab/pubs/03_HeathertonWyland_APP.
5. Municipal Education Directorate (2011/2012). *Annual Education Report*. Sefwi Wiawso. Author.
6. Municipal Education Directorate (2013). *Circuit supervisors' annual Report*. Sefwi Wiawso. Author.
7. Ofori, R., & Dampson, D. G. (2011). *Research methods and statistics using SPSS*. Amakom-Kumasi: Payless Publication Limited.