



Original Research Article

Exploring self-concept among adult learners: The case of students pursuing adult education and human resource studies at SCDE, University of Ghana

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This paper investigates self-concept among adult learners pursuing Adult Education and Human Resource Studies at University of Ghana. Seeing students offering frank judgement about their academic performance in relations with others, provide opportunity to educators to suggest motivational strategies, to promote excellence amongst them. Interview guide was administered to a sample of 20 students' purposively and conveniently selected. Descriptive statistical tool in percentages were adopted in presenting the results. It recommends that students should participate more in group studies. A system of counseling should be put in place by SCDE management to support students who develop negative self-concept (social and academic) to overcome their challenges.

Key words: Self-concept, academic performance, social experiences, competencies, lifelong learning, human capital

INTRODUCTION

Today, more than ever before, adult learners in tertiary institutions, including those in the University of Ghana, should not hesitate placing premium on meaningful learning as key to their development. Participation in lifelong learning should necessarily be the priority of every adult learner. That is one of the surest ways of ensuring the development of critical human capital which Ghana, as a country, needs badly. However, the interests and concerns of adult learners engaged in both social and academic activities can be realised if they demonstrate positive 'self-concept' for themselves. The questions to ask then are: What is self-concept? and how important is self-concept to an adult learner pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Adult Education and Human Resource Studies? This program is offered at School of Continuing and Distance Education (SCDE), College of Education, University of Ghana, Legon.

According to DeVito (Oduro-Mensah and Biney, 2013) 'self-concept' is about who you are and how you perceive yourself and others. How one perceives oneself, be it one's feelings and thoughts about one's strengths and weaknesses, and one's abilities and limitations, matters greatly in one's social and academic performances. Pajares

and Schunk (2005) had earlier observed that self-concept or one's perception of oneself is a judgement we make of ourselves in specific domains, competencies or skills, which probably develops at the moment the learner is aware of his or her independence. Knowles (Nafukho, 2005) opines that as people mature, their self-concept moves from one characterised by a dependent personality to one characterised by independence and self-direction. Adult learners are maturing, if not matured already, with diverse social, political and economic responsibilities in their respective homes, communities, and workplaces (Scott, 2002). They have numerous challenges to surmount so as to succeed in their social and academic endeavors. However, finding the need and time to continue their education to tertiary level, in itself, is commendable. Perhaps, some adult learners are able to do this to a large extent; due to the positive 'self-concept' they hold for themselves.

Fasokun et al. (2005) also assert that the ways we see ourselves affect our perception of situations, and the world, as a whole. It can be deduced that if the view of an adult learner towards his or her academic pursuit is positive, he

or she will stay focused and strive hard to do better. If it is negative, it will reduce the level of interest and desire in what he or she does especially in academic pursuit. This should be expected because (Crowl et al., 1997) had stated that building of self-confidence, personal regard and competence are features of individuals' experiences. They contend that most 'self-concepts' are working 'self-concepts' that are open to change as learners encounter new experiences that provide them new feedback. Indeed, how we imagine ourselves now, and in the future, determines our self-concept.

Wilmot, a leading communication scholar (Seiler and Beall, 2011), asserts that each person's view of himself [or herself] affects his [or her] as well as his [or her] partner's behaviour. This view of self is what Wilmot refers to as 'social self-concept'. He adds that social self-concept consists of two components: one derived from interpersonal relationships and one derived from belonging to larger, less personal groupings such as race, ethnicity and culture. It is not surprising to learn that Rogers (Fasokun et al., 2005) observes that the way in which people see or perceive themselves, their inner selves, could influence how they perceive the world and interpret the events around them. As a personality theorist, Rogers, asserts that self-concept is the single most important aspect of our personality. Indeed, Rogers (Cohen et al., 1988) observes that people strive to enhance their self-concepts by learning and by developing themselves toward some "ideal self". It may be argued here that if adult learners pursuing undergraduate studies at SCDE, University of Ghana, evaluate themselves positive academically and socially, it will reflect in their learning endeavors. This tends to suggest that positive self-concept culminates to some extent in success in learning endeavors, whilst negative self-concept, may manifest in failures in learning endeavours.

As educator of adult learning, it becomes imperative that one concerns oneself with the impact of adult learners' self-concepts, on their motivation to learn. Adult learners with learning difficulties should be supported by educators to overcome their challenges. Afterall, Combs (Snowman and Biehler, 2006) asserts that the task of an educator is not one of prescribing, making, moulding, coercing, coaxing, or cajoling; it is one of ministering to a process already in being. The faculty and the administrators in SCDE, College of Education, University of Ghana, should serve as facilitators to adult learners. They should serve as encouragers, helpers, assisters, colleagues and friends of adult learners to motivate them learn.

Statement of the Problem

Many learning problems surround acquisition of education by adult learners enrolled in Bachelor of Arts Education and Human Resources Studies of School of Continuing and Distance Education (SCDE), University of Ghana. Among these include the fact that many of the adult learners who get enrolled coming from diverse educational foundation. A

good number of adult learners - get onto this program by possessing diploma programs-(Adult Education; and Youth in Development Work) respectively run by SCDE. Many of them are workers, married couples, who are playing many social roles in their respective communities, churches, clubs and unions.

There are problems associated with methods of instructional deliveries. Poor ways in which teaching and learning is undertaken in tertiary institutions, including the University of Ghana, is truly a problem with adult learners. After all how one sees oneself can make a great difference in how he or she pursues his or her academic activity. Perhaps it is on this basis that Rogers (Gamble and Gamble, 2005) asserts that "every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he or she is the centre". For example, when adult learners are treated as though they are inferior, unintelligent, not gifted, or unattractive, they will often begin acting accordingly. It means therefore that people are products of how others treat them and of the information or messages others send them. The numerous responsibilities to be shouldered by adult learners are likely to affect their self-image, self-esteem and their self-concepts. In light of the above supposition, the question that must be answered is: What factors influence adult learners' development of social and academic self-concepts at SCDE?

Objectives of the Study

- (i) determine influences of lecturers on the development of adult learners' self-concept;
- (ii) determine influences of study groups on - development of adult learners self-concepts;
- (iii) determine influences of cultural background on development of adult learners' self-concept;
- (iv) suggest motivational strategies to prop up self-concept in adult learners.

Literature Review

Self-concept refers to a person's judgement of his or her competence or skills in comparison to others (Scott 2002; Silverman and Casazza, 2000). The concept includes the notions of 'academic self-concept' and 'social self-concept'. Social self-concept generally increases during college years, with signs of the increase present by the end of sophomore year. Academic self-concept also generally grows during this time but is characterised by early declines during the first year of college, with gradual increases through the remaining years (Scott, 2002; Silverman and Casazza, 2000). It has also been found that self-concept tends to become more differentiated during college years, such that students have varying judgements about their competence in different areas of study. Astin (Silverman and Casazza, 2000) believes that this phenomenon reflects students' increased sense of reality, as they have more exposure to diverse areas of study, and interaction with more students.

At the heart of this dynamic process is the premise that if you do not accept yourself, probably no one else will, either. It can therefore be argued that adult learners who have strong academic self-concepts, often are more highly motivated, and earn higher grades than students with weaker academic self-concepts.

Seiler and Beall (2011) point out self-concept or self-identity is a person's perceived self which consists of an organised collection of beliefs and attitudes about self. They added that how we perceived ourselves to be is determined by our experiences and communication with others, the roles and values we have selected for ourselves, and how we evaluate ourselves and believe others see us. No wonder, self-concept is perceived to consist of two subcomponents: self-image, how we see ourselves or our mental picture of self. An instance is one finding himself or herself as worker, adult learner, father or mother at the same time. The other is 'self-esteem' which is about our feelings and attitudes toward ourselves or how we evaluate ourselves. For example, you telling yourself as a hard worker, an average father or mother, and a good adult learner, making it an undisputable fact that both self-image and self-esteem make up our self-concept. This is significant to the extent that, there is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that is your own self (Seiler and Beall, 2011).

Some theorists (Combs and Gonzalez, 1994; Combs et al., 1978; Snygg and Combs, 1994) Purkey and Novak (1996) have postulated that the maintenance, protection, and enhancement of the perceived self (one's own personal existence as viewed by oneself) is basic motive behind all human behaviours. Use of this basic assumption, organised into what is generally known as self-concept theory, can clarify and integrate seemingly unrelated aspects of life in classrooms. For example, students who have learned to see themselves as troublemakers may respond by being discipline problems, just as students who have learned to view themselves as scholars may spend many hours in libraries. The dynamics are the same, even if the resulting behaviours are quite different (Scott, 2002). Self-concept has served as a central part of many human personality theories and the basis for numerous programs in education. Academic self-concept is a function of an individual's academic ability and performance. What you think about yourself shapes, and in many ways, determine what you do and say (Seiler and Beall, 2011). What you think about yourself, is influenced by the information you receive from others, which helps you create an image of who you are. What and how we seriously apply ourselves to academic work while at school goes a long way to inform, and also influence, the development of our academic self-concept. Hence, participation in team learning, group studies and work, discussions and projects can constitute qualities of positive self-concept of adult learners. This is significant because students who have more positive perceptions of themselves and their abilities are more persistent at school tasks (Pratt, 2002; Buang, 2003 and Manning et al., 2006). Those who have poor self-concepts are more likely

to give up when faced with difficult situations (Covington, 1984; Purkey and Novak, 1996). Self-concept and academic ability are related (Pratt 2002; Buang, 2003 and Manning et al., 2006).

Purkey and Novak (1996) assert that the ever-widening experiences of the developing person constantly modify the self-concept. By experiencing the world through inviting and disinviting interactions with others, as well as through interactions with oneself, the developing person organises a theory of personal existence. Mercer (2011) proposes that self-concept consists of domains that differ in significance for the individual according to one's age. To Hartner, some domains are more significant at certain ages than others. For example, job performance, social competence, and appearance are self-concept components that are salient - in defining the self in adulthood. In a similar vein, the self-concepts of students are heavily influenced by those who treat them as unable, worthless, and irresponsible. At some level of awareness each person continually asks a very basic question "who do you say I am?" The answer to the question influences how people behave and what they become. More so, the schools probably exert the single greatest influence on how students see themselves and their abilities (Pratt, 2002).

Classroom teachers, as (Merriam et al., 2007) and others assert, are stimulus objects, attractive or repellent in their own right. By their very presence, they have subtle but profound impact on students' self-concepts. The teacher's task, therefore, is to behave in ways that encourage positive perceptions in students regarding themselves and their abilities. From the moment students first make contact with school, the inviting or disinviting actions of school personnel - coupled with the physical environments, the official policies, the instructional programs, and the political processes - dominate their education. Students able to meet the academic expectations of schools are likely to develop positive attitudes toward themselves as learners, whereas those who fail are likely to develop negative feelings. It is an accepted fact that, the school profoundly influences students' development (Pratt, 2002).

Another view of self-concept includes the idea of a 'possible self' - the conception of self in the future state (Silverman and Casazza, 2000). Related to yet different from the possible self is a concept known as the imposter syndrome (Scott, 2002). According to Brookfield (1995), some people believe they are not to be taken seriously because they really do not know what they are doing. These persons believe that they are careful not to reveal their own incapacities. They feel they have no safe place to reveal their doubts and are therefore unable to receive feedback or suggestions for change. It means that adult learners in SCDCE need massive motivational support from both lecturers and administrators. The reality is that the way an adult learner perceives himself or herself is of paramount importance to the university lecturers. This is because the basic purpose of teaching is to help every student develop a positive self-concept. It stands to reason that adult learners who have strong academic self-concepts are often more

highly motivated, and earn higher grades in the courses they read, than students with weaker academic self-concepts. This is significant because Silverman and Casazza (2000) assert that the opportunity for involvement in the institution promotes self-concept development. When students receive faculty support for their academic and intellectual pursuits, their self-concept -are enhanced. The opportunity for involvement in academics and student government is also important.

Seiler and Beall (2011), perceive self-concept as a process. Self-perceptions and the perception which others have of us differ from time to time, from situation to situation, and from person to person. One view of oneself may vary somewhat according to how one feels about oneself at a given time. For example, if you receive a high grade on a difficult assignment, you might feel very good about yourself or at least about your effectiveness as a student. Your view of yourself might differ dramatically if you had received a low grade, especially if you had put a lot of effort into the assignment.

In terms of development of self-concept, parental communication, both verbal and nonverbal, generally has -extremely strong impact on the initial development of self-concept. Gerike (1997) writes that there are advantages to ageing. She says that ageing brings increased self-confidence, a more reliable inner voice, an acceptance of not being perfect, a sense of perspective that difficult situations get worked out, an acceptance that life is not fair, and a willingness to accept responsibility instead of directing the blame elsewhere. Bem (Seiler and Beall, 2011) also believes that sometimes we do not know our own attitudes, feelings, or emotions directly. We therefore focus on others to obtain such information. We learn a great deal about ourselves by observing our own behaviours. He suggests that what we do or how we act is a guide to what is happening inside us and how we feel about ourselves.

It must be said, however, that self-concept is affected not only by how we perceive ourselves, but also, how we perceive others, how others perceive us, and how we think others perceive us. Self-concept is based on both past and present experiences, which affect how we will perceive ourselves in the future. Our self-concept is further determined by the values, attitudes, and beliefs we possess; how we attribute these qualities to others; and how they connect them to us. It is probably because of this that Berko et al. (2007) assert that one's self-concept can work for or against him or her. If you tell yourself that you are clumsy, or that you are not comfortable in social situations, that is what you will probably be. They aptly put it in this way:

We have a choice each time we think, to think positively or negatively. Many of us don't believe it, but that absolutely is our choice. Once we understand that our private thoughts are ours alone to determine, we can select to programme our brains with empowering, confidence-building thoughts (Berko et al., 2007).

Tubbs (2001) observes that students learn from each other in discussion groups. He adds that over the course of the term, the discussion groups often become social groups

and, for some, surrogate families as well. Tubbs (2001) argues persuasively on behalf of the use of small groups as teaching methodology for virtually any subject matter. Tubbs reveals that in 1985, *The Organisational Behaviour Review Journal* devoted an entire issue to the use of groups in teaching. The editorial explained it this way:

This special issue is devoted to promoting an increased understanding of why groups should be used in teaching and how they can be used effectively. These issues are becoming increasingly important to everyone in higher education, in part because there is a growing recognition that learning groups provide a potential solution of some of our difficult pedagogical problems (Tubbs, 2001).

Light (Tubbs, 2001) observes that an extensive research at Harvard University has shown that learning in groups is both more effective and more fun than learning individually. The researcher is of the view that learning in groups is not only useful for addressing difficult pedagogical problems, but also, for addressing andragogical problems as well. The reality is that adult learners participate in learning activities with reservoir of experiences. When they learn together, the probability is that they will deeply get themselves involved in discussions during learning activities. In the final analysis, they will ultimately, develop positive self-concepts for themselves. This is possible because, each and everyone will be assigned, a responsibility. They will learn to interact and participate actively in group discussions. Not only that, they will gradually, but surely, perceive themselves as having developed positive self-image and self-esteem as they learn to individually research on specific topics, and also, make insightful contributions during group discussions.

In terms of culture, Wilson (1999) defines it as the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, and transmitted from one generation to another. Beebe and Masterson (2006) assert that an important component of self-concept is culture of origin. They add that different cultures foster different beliefs and attitudes about communication, status, nonverbal behaviour, and all the interpersonal dynamics. The development of selfhood takes place very differently from culture to culture. In Africa, the self and the world are united, and the two are part of a web of independent relationships (Pratt, 2002; Sarah, 2011 and Nafukho et al., 2005). On the issue of the individual (Nafukho et al., 2005), one observes that the individual has little freedom for self-determination outside the context of the traditional African family, and community.

Culture influences self-concept and thus such behaviours as the willingness to communicate in a group. There is ample evidence that individuals from different cultures interpret situations and concepts very differently. Therefore, understanding cultural differences is essential to understanding behaviour in small groups. This is so, because the various groups which one affiliates, also help to define one's self-concept. One method, however, to overcome negative self-talk, is to be aware of your negative messages. One also needs to collect one's recycled

Table 1: Influence of Lecturers and Study Groups on Adult learners Self-Concept (n=20)

Characteristics	Yes (%)	No (%)	Mean	SD
Undergraduate student	20	0	1	0
Lecturers fostered Good group relationship	100	-	1	0
Lecturers gave Individualised attention	55	45	1.45	0.5
Show of Professionalism	100	-	1	0
Feel good at SCDE	100	-	1	0
Belonged to Study groups	55	45	1.45	0.5
Group research Presentation	60	40	1.5	0.5
Contributed to group discussions -	55	45	1.31	0.5

Source: Field Data, 2015

negatives, write them down, and regularly read them to oneself. One further needs to replace the negative thoughts with positive ones by flooding one's brain with such statement as "I am a people person" (Berko et al., 2007). Once you start focusing on the positives, the negatives tend to go away. Negative self-talk cannot survive if you don't feed it. After all positive self-talk really can turn life around and make life more successful.

Pratt (2002) also argues that efforts to cultivate positive self-concept in students are a way to eventually address social concerns including poverty and homelessness. Beane suggested three general approaches to improving student self-concept. One approach involves such activities as sensitivity training. For example, students might sit for 15 minutes one day a week and talk about how much they like themselves. A second approach involves introducing self-concept courses that are taught during the school day. The third approach considers the importance of the total school environment as an ecological system in which positive and realistic self-concepts can be fostered. This is very significant because perceptions and self-concepts do not develop in isolation. They are products of social life. Social living is strongly shaped by guiding ideal. In sum, self-concept theory as presented shows how a person's perceived self develops primarily from messages sent, received, interpreted, and acted upon (Mercer, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

Interview guide was developed and conducted on 20 adult learners pursuing Bachelor of Arts in Adult Education and Human Resource Studies at SCDE, College of Education, University of Ghana, Legon. This sample size of 20 considered representative as the researcher's intention was to understand, analyse and describe the situation in which adult learners perceive and judge their own self-concept in social and academic experiences. The study adopted purposive and convenience sampling procedures in selecting the sample used for this exploratory study. One respondent was interviewed at a time. Insightful information on the subject matter was collected. The data collected was analysed using simple percentages. The

responses from the open-ended questions were summarised, organised and interpreted in the form of tables. Some limited amount of descriptive-narrative approach was also adopted to analyse some of the responses. This was to ensure that the results derived from the study could be communicated without any technicalities. It sought the views of adult learners on their development of self-concepts from lecturers, friends and cultural perspectives, in their studentship at the university and what they perceived to be motivational strategies to encourage this.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research analysis and findings in - tables - following the research objectives.

Influence of lecturers and study groups on the development of adult learners self-concept

Table 1 - showed that all adult learners (100%) were undergraduate students at SCDE. All were of the view that lecturers fostered good relationship with them in class. On how they perceived the type of attention received from lecturers, more than half (55%) with (M=1.45, SD=0.5) thought that lecturers gave them individualized attention, with 45% of them being of the view that lecturers treated them as group rather than people with varied abilities and interests. On issue of lecturers' show of professionalism, all of them (100%) said that lecturers demonstrated professionalism in their teaching indicating they having mastery of subject matter as well. Based on the realization that lecturers demonstrated professionalism, all the participants felt good learning at SCDE. Table 1 further indicates that fifty-five percent (55%) of the students belonged to study groups and an equal proportion contributed actively to discussions. This is consistent with requirements for participation in team learning, group studies and work, discussions and projects that constitute qualities of positive self-concept of adult learners. Students, who have more positive perceptions of themselves, and their abilities, are more persistent at school tasks (Pajares and Schunk, 2005 and Merriam et al., 2007). With 45% of the students not participating in group studies, it was clear that a good number of these students had negative self-concepts making this result

Table 2. Study Group and Performance on Adult learners Self-concept (n=20)

Characteristics	V.Good (%)	Good (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Poor (%)	V. Poor (%)	Mean	SD
Assessment of group's performance on program	45	40	10	5	-	4.37	1.0
perception of friends on their performance on program	20	35	20	15	10	3.63	1.2

Source: Field Data, 2015.

consistent with findings of (Buang 2003; Pratt, 2002 and Weimer, 2002) who argued that those who have poor self-concepts are more likely to give up when faced with difficult situations. Self-concept and academic ability are thus related. Table 1 also showed that more than half (60%) of students did engage in group presentation, and of this, students who presented their research findings in groups tended to have more positive self-concept compared with those who did not practice group presentation. This should be expected because Sarah (2011) had earlier stated that the building of self-confidence, personal regard and competence are features of individuals' experiences, when students engaged in their group presentation.

How one perceives oneself, be it one's feelings and thoughts about one's strengths and weaknesses and one's abilities and limitations, matters greatly in one's social and academic performances. As per results gleaned from the research, adult learners who perceived themselves as very good performers on the programmes they are pursuing also perceived themselves as having positive self-concept. The reverse holds for adult learners, who saw themselves to have weaknesses and limitations and tended to dwell on that rather than on their strengths. It was established that more of those who have positive self-concepts also belonged to a study group representing more than half (55%) of the respondents. However, the 45% of respondents who did not join any study group, corresponding to 15% of students with negative self-concepts, tended to see their performance as low. This may be due to many factors; including introversion on the part of some students, and some also thinking group study will waste their time. Of those who belonged to study groups, 60% (m=1.5, SD=0.5), they do undertake research and do presentations to members on topical issues and this goes to embolden them as positive learners who rely more on their strengths rather than on their weaknesses. Respondents who did not have any study groups tended not to engage in research and in any presentation at all. Results for those who were in study groups showed that almost half (45%) of them did not take active part in discussion sessions. Thus, fifty-five percent (55%) however, did take active part in the groups' discussions. A majority (75%) of members of the study groups perceived the contributions of group members as good. Only ten percent saw members' contributions as bad or unsatisfactory. More than half (65%) of the students (M=1.19, SD=0.4) perceived themselves as positive contributors during the discussion sessions. This observation supports Fasokun, et al. (2005) assertion that the ways in which we see ourselves affect our perception of situations, and the world, as a whole. It can be deduced that if the view of an adult learner towards his or her academic pursuit is positive, he or she will stay focused

and strive hard to do better. If it is negative, it will reduce the level of interest and desire in what he or she does, as far as academic pursuit is concerned. In the context of this study, only 15% of the respondents perceived their contributions to discussions as negative. This was supported by responses from students who had study groups but did not take active part in their group discussions, making them acquire inadequate experiences to help them develop and build self-confidence, thus, positive self-concept.

Influence of study groups on performance on adult learners self-concept

Table 2 indicates respondents' assessment of their group's performance on programs they are pursuing. Majority (85%) of students ranked their group's performance on the programs as at least good with (m= 4.37, SD=1.0). This result is consistent with the findings (Oduro-Mensah and Biney, 2013) that self-concept is about who you are and how you perceive yourself and others. Respondents who see their group's performance on programs they are pursuing as poor are only five percent. This is insignificant compared to the 85% of the respondents whose assertion is consistent with Merriam et al., (2007) that adult learners are of the view that their performances would be good with help from others. With the perception of friends on their performance on programs they are pursuing, more than fifty percent (55%) ranked their performance as at least good and twenty percent (20%) of them were also satisfied with their performance with (m=3.63, SD=1.2) which agrees with an assertion made by (Scott, 2002). Even though twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents were not satisfied with their perception of their friends' performance, it is normal to see people in a group to perceive issues, differently.

Influence of cultural background on the development of adult learners self-concept

Table 3, shows that, 60% of the students agreed that their culture encouraged independent decision making with (M=1.4, SD=0.5). Mercer (2011) had earlier observed self-concept as a judgement of oneself in specific domains, competencies or skills, which probably develops at the moment the learner is aware of his or her independence. This assertion is consistent with the response of this 60% of the adult learners who engaged in independent decision making outside their culture while actively contributing to their various study discussions. This was

Table 3. Influence of Cultural Background on Adult learners Self-concept (n=20)

Culture influence on:	Yes (%)	No (%)	Mean	SD
Independent Decision	60	40	1.4	0.5
Role models	75	25	1.25	0.4
Culture creativity	65	30	1.32	0.5
Family support	50	50	1.5	0.5

Source: Field Data, 2015.

done based on their areas of academic pursuit. Knowles (Nafukho, 2005) opines that as people mature, their self-concept moves from one characterised by a dependent personality to one characterised by independence and self-direction. This assertion supports the results, as students who have positive self-concept engaged in independent activities, and one of which is the presentation of academic papers. Forty percent (40%) of the adult learners, however, disagreed with the assertion and said that their culture played a major role in development of their self-concept. They indicated that their culture did not promote independent thinking and creativity in them. They were not made to be curious and be asking critical questions.

Majority of students (75%) with a mean score (1.25) and standard deviation (0.4) said they have role-models in their communities that inspired them to aspire to, and beyond, their levels. This supports what Seiler and Beall (2011) meant when they argued that, what you think about yourself, is influenced by the information you receive from others which helps you create an image of who you are. What and how we seriously apply ourselves to academic work while at school goes a long way to inform, and also influence, the development of our self-concept academically. Though 25% of the students indicated that they did not have role models in their communities, they still believed that role-models are very important, in the development of the right self-concept. It was established from the study that most of the students (65%) with (m=1.32, SD=0.5) believed that their culture plays crucial role in helping them to be creative. There were, however, 35% of the students who were of the opinion that their culture had not made them to be creative but dependent people who lack initiative and problem solving skills. Consistent with this is Pratt (2002) assertion that the ever-widening experiences of the developing person constantly modify the self-concept. By experiencing the world through inviting and disinviting interactions with others, as well as through interactions with oneself, the developing person organises a theory of personal existence. Table 3 further showed that half (50%) of the students with mean and standard deviation scores of (m=1.5, SD= 0.5) respectively, had some kind of family support system in place for their education. Similar percentage (50%) of students seemed not to receive any support at all from family members. (Manning et al., 2006) propose that self-concept consists of domains that differ in ability to take up life challenges. To Hartner (Manning, et al., 2006), some domains are more significant at certain ages than others. For example, job performance, social competence, learning

at school, as is the case in SCDE, and appearance, are self-concept components that are salient in defining the self in adulthood. In a similar vein, the self-concepts of students are heavily influenced by those who treat them as unable, worthless, and irresponsible. At some level of awareness each person continually asks very basic questions, one of which is "Who do you say I am?" The answer to the question influences how people behave and what they become. More so, the schools probably exert the single greatest influence on how students see themselves and their abilities (Weimer, 2002). Of those students who said they have family support, they put the support systems they received into; financial, academic, spiritual and moral support. Evidence from the analysed results showed that almost all of them think family members satisfy them with these needs, schooling at SCDE.

Motivation strategies that prop up the development of adult learners self-concept

Table 4 shows that motivation strategies for development of academic self-concept by students at SCDE was a concern to all the students. Thus, all (100%) of the respondents indicated that, group study and punctuality, served as motivation strategies when it comes to academic self-concept development. This is significant because Silverman and Casazza (2000) asserted that the opportunity for involvement in the institution, just like study groups, promotes self-concept development. The Table also showed that nearly all (90%) the respondents thought that time management and another (70%) of them saw active participation as motivation strategies with (m=2.36, SD=1.1). Motivation strategies for development of social self-concept were: for healthy competition among learners (95%), tolerance for one another (90%), politeness to all colleagues (65%) and honesty to friends (50%). Looking at faculties influence as motivation strategies for development of adult learners self-concept, variables such as; rapport, motivation, encouragement of group presentation and good lesson delivery were accepted by 95%, 95%, 90% and 75% of the students respectively to help in the development of adult learner's self-concept. Students are better able to meet the academic expectations of schools as they are likely to develop positive attitudes toward themselves as learners, whereas those who fail are likely to develop negative feelings toward themselves as learners. The school profoundly influences students' development of positive self-concept (Pratt, 2002).

Summary and Conclusion

(i) Group study and presentation lead to development of

Table 4. Motivation strategies in developing Adult learners Self-concept (n=20)

Characteristics	Descriptions	%	Mean	SD
Academic self-concept	Group Study	100	2.36	1.1
	Punctuality	100		
	Time Management	90		
	Active Participation	70		
Social self-concept	Competition	95	2.23	1.1
	Tolerance	90		
	Politeness	65		
	Honesty	50		
Faculties influence	Rapport	95	2.41	1.1
	Motivation	95		
	Encourage Presentation	90		
	Good Lesson Delivery	75		

Source: Field Data, 2015

students' positive self-concept.

(ii) Lecturers' demonstration of high professionalism helps develop in students' positive Self-concept in their studies and academic achievements.

(iii) Healthy competitive academic environment leads to development of social self-concept among learners.

(iv) Learners who benefit from family support systems tend to be more motivated and develop positive self-concept in their entire working life.

(v) Time management, active participation and faculty support serve as key motivation strategies when it comes to the development of academic self-concept among students.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

(i) Lecturers should use more of individualized teaching method to cater for varied abilities.

(ii) More students should be encouraged to join and take active part in study groups.

(iii) A system of counseling should be put in place by SCDE management to support students who develop negative self-concept (social and academic) to overcome their challenges.

(iv) Families should be encouraged to support adult learners to complement their efforts to have holistic (social and academic) positive self-concept.

Implications for Practice

The study showed that there is a positive correlation between education and development. Every development has to begin with a human being. Actual development takes place only when the people get themselves developed, and that starts first, with paying attention to issues of the self-concept. Structures do not represent development. Physical structures, for instance, are rather the products of development.

Much education is needed in our communities regarding what development is. People should know that development is intrinsic and it is only when they are personally developed that they can experience it through physical structures, otherwise, people's or communities' preference of physical structures over self-concept development through education, will continue to pose challenge to development effort, especially in developing countries, including Ghana.

Social exclusion is also another challenging issue when it comes to the issue of the self-concept. Working in groups seemed to help in building in people better and positive self-concept. People are excluded in society due to certain social structures. Because of this, they are unable to participate in learning in groups and embarking on self-directed learning.

Lastly, people envelopment is another phenomenon that greatly poses challenge to learning in both school and development work in Ghana. Some people recoil into their shelves. They are complacent about their current situation. They feel they are okay but it has been shown that active participation in group work, especially in learning, lead to the development of positive self-concept, and this, needs to be encouraged at all level of life. The aim of positive self-concept development is to empower the less advantaged. Therefore, faculty and lecturers in educational institutions should look for such individuals; such people should be educated on their status or situation through helping them to build in themselves positive self-concept. Such people should be taught that the world has in store, to offer, more than an individual can handle. They should learn that they also have in them what it takes to control their own destiny. They should be motivated to believe that they can also do it. They can also do it because in them lies what it takes to achieve any height in life.

The study concluded that students at SCDE were interested in development of positive self-concept to help them actualise their ambitions. Participating in University education requires enough motivation than personal interest. This motivation arises out of the interaction with

the learning community and commitment to learn than external factors like family pressure and institutional support. Students expect family support and encouragement to serve as incentive for their development of positive self-concept. Positive self-concept for students can no longer depend on students' initial education but good social, academic, cultural and motivational strategies to equip them in their entire working life.

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