The Influence of Teachers’ Classroom Practices on the Self-Concept of Primary School Pupils with Disabilities

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Abstract
The purpose of the study was to investigate into the influence of teacher classroom practices on the self-concept of children with disabilities in upper primary schools in the Tano North District. The ex post facto research design was used for the study. The instruments used in gathering data for the study were questionnaire and observation guide for teacher classroom practices and a structured interview guide to measure the self-concept of pupils with disabilities. A total of 98 respondents were used. This comprised 30 teachers and 68 pupils with disabilities. Four research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Results indicated that teacher classroom practices have a moderate relationship with the self-concept of children with disabilities. There was no relationship between type of disability and self-concept. Gender of children with disabilities was found to be related to their self-concept. From the findings it is recommended that educational policies should provide equal opportunity for all including children with disabilities. There should also be regular in-service training for teachers to take into accounts the characteristics of children with disabilities in their classroom practices. The study is significant for Ghana Education Service (GES) and other stakeholders. Also contributes to teachers’ awareness of the tendency to discriminate against females or girls in the classroom.

Keywords: self concept, primary school, children with disabilities, teacher, classroom practices

INTRODUCTION
Self-concept refers to self-evaluation or self-perception, and it represents the sum of an individual’s beliefs about his or her own attributes (Alena, Hadley, Elizabeth, Hair, & Moore, 2008). Self-concept can also be one’s beliefs about oneself. Children are likely to behave in ways that are consistent with their beliefs about themselves. The behaviour of other people in a child’s life also plays a crucial role in the development of that child’s self-concept. The behaviour of parents, teachers and peers toward a child communicate their evaluations about a child’s worth as a person (Ormrod, 1995).

Some children are different from their classmates to the extent that they need special educational services to meet their unique needs (Ormrod, 1995). One of the largest groups of students who differ from their mates is those formally classified as disabled (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 1995). According to Reddy (2007) children with disabilities have always been part of our communities and for that matter our schools which are part of the community.

Self-Concept of Students with Disabilities
Disability does not in and of itself result in lowered self-concept (Johnston & Sinclair; Sze & Valentin, 2006). However, a number of studies have shown that children with disabilities in the regular schools have self-concept that is lower than that of their peers without disabilities (Ascione & Borg, 1980).

The question to be answered is, if disability does not in and of itself cause low self concept, then what is the reason behind their lowered self-concept which is in contrast to that of the peers without disabilities? The self-concept of students is formed from experiences which include classroom conditions. These conditions are those that are facilitated by the teachers’ classroom practices. Classroom environment is closely related to the self-concept of students (Rehman, 2001).

Teacher Classroom Practices and Self-Concept of Students
The instructional, curriculum, social and organisational factors within the classroom which are facilitated by the teacher influence the self-concept development of children with disabilities (Rehman, 2001). Therefore, teachers’ classroom practices include the entire instructional, curriculum, social and organisational techniques teachers’ exhibited in the classroom in an attempt to facilitate an enabling environment for all categories of students’ learning. The teacher is an important instrument in the instructional process and he plays a very important role in shaping the personality of children. The way the teacher teaches and handles the students has an
effect on the personality development of children. This development includes their (children) self-concept as well. The way a teacher carries out his role in the class will affect the emotional climate in the classroom too (Chauha, 1996).

Looking at the above discussions, it is clear that teachers, as part of the community and like parents, might be in a position to demand, expect, or force students with disabilities to do certain things in the classroom for which they might not be in a position to do. Such conditions can put pressure on a student with disabilities and influence their self-concept development in the classroom. According to Shea and Bauer (1997), the society and significant others in the environment can influence the development of personal identity.

Students with disabilities, sometimes, require assistance and/or accommodations which include a broad array of social support or classroom climate and achievement believe factors which influence them (Smith & Nelson, 1993). A major problem faced by teachers in the regular classroom is how to create an environment in which children with disabilities can adjust and learn (Ascione & Borg, 1980). Elbaum and Vaughn (2009) also contend that the challenge for all teachers, especially those who teach students with disabilities, is how to help children with disabilities develop positive images of themselves as competent learners while at the same time maintaining high academic standards. In many situations, children with disabilities are just labelled whilst their learning problem or difficulties are left unattended to (Knoblock, 1963).

In Ghana, a study conducted by Kuyini and Desai (2008) to examine the instructional practices of teachers in inclusive classrooms revealed that majority of the teachers (58%) did not have any training in special education. The study further revealed that teachers used more generic teaching practices with limited or no adaptations which are tailored to the needs of students with disabilities. Besides, it was found in the study that teachers' experience in working with students with disabilities was the background variable most predictive of adaptive teaching. However, according to the American Association for Agricultural Education, AAAE (2001), a professional understanding, which is knowledge in exceptionalities, is necessary for teachers in meeting the needs of children with disabilities in the classroom. The lack of professional understanding in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and the use of more generic teaching practices suggest that teachers’ classroom practices may not be favourable to the total development of children with disabilities including their self-concept. The findings of a study conducted by Yekple and Avoke (2006) suggested that teachers were not able to meet the learning needs of children with disabilities in the classroom.

Teacher Attitude as Part of Classroom Practices and Self-Concept of Students
The attitude of a teacher towards students and the general climate the teacher establishes in the classroom has a major impact on the success of students particularly those with disabilities. Attitudes are learnt and they appear to be affected by the amount of knowledge and contact a person has regarding a particular issue or group (Smith et al., 1995). In Ghana, teachers’ knowledge in disabilities can be said to be low, in reference to Kuyini and Desais’ (2008) research. Consequently, attitude of teachers’ towards children with disabilities is more likely to be negative. Another study which was conducted by Silikker (2009) showed that people with disabilities are given unfair treatment in Ghana. In other words, people have negative attitude towards people with disabilities. This unfair treatment takes the form of giving names, insulting or ignoring these children. Thus, these children are excluded from full participation in activities in the society in which they find themselves. The school, being part of the community, is not an exception from this situation. Deku (2000) reported that teachers in Ghana do not favour educating children with disabilities together with children without disabilities, and teachers have negative attitude towards educating children with disabilities in the regular school. In Yekple and Avoke’s (2006) research, they found that about 55% to 60% of the teachers had negative attitude towards children with disabilities in the regular classroom. One can infer from these findings that teacher classroom practices in the regular schools are likely not to favour children with disabilities thereby affecting their self-concept development negatively.

Gender Issues in the Classroom
Generally, there is the view that inequality exists in the classroom. Various researchers and writers have written on gender issues in the classroom. Dickman (1993), for instance posits that discriminatory teacher behaviour does not begin in the college classroom but rather with the advent of schooling. Frawley (2005), citing the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, also states that gender bias persists in many elementary classrooms. This means that gender discriminatory attitude is not limited to any level in the educational system but found at all levels. According to Fennema and Peterson (as cited in Dickman, 1993) research has demonstrated that, from preschool onwards, the activities chosen for classes appeal to boys’ interests and the presentation formats selected are those with which boys excel or they are encouraged more than are girls (Fennema & Peterson as cited in Dickman, 1993). The quality of teacher contacts varies between the genders. Boys receive more teacher reactions of
praise, criticism and remediation (Sadker & Sadker as cited in Dickman, 1993). Baker (1986) reported that in secondary Science classrooms, more precise teacher comments were rendered to males than to females in terms of both scholarship and conduct.

According to the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences Teaching Centre of Colombia University (n.d.), a large body of research shows teachers:
1. Call on male students more frequently than female students.
2. Are more likely to use male students’ names when calling upon students and in attributing ideas advanced in discussion.
3. Ask male students more abstract questions but female students more factual questions.
4. Are less likely to elaborate upon points made by female students.
5. Ask female students easy questions; asking male students more difficult questions that require higher-order thinking (Hall & Sandler as cited in Dickman, 1993)
6. Look at male students to answer questions before females (or males) even can raise their hands (Hall & Sandler as cited in Dickman, 1993)
7. Refer only to male contributions (Hall & Sandler as cited in Dickman, 1993)

In terms of discipline according to Saskatchewan Education (1991):
1. Males are disciplined more frequently and more harshly by teachers than are females even when both genders misbehave in identical ways.
2. Some teachers have different expectations concerning behaviour for females than they do for males.
3. Females receive more encouragement to be quiet and passive than do males.

The Graduate School of Arts & Sciences Teaching Centre of Colombia University (n.d., p. 2) has it that: Our classrooms contain certain hidden biases; to the extent that we want students who actively participate in discussion and tend to value a verbal style that is confident, assertive, and forceful. These biases make some students; including females feel inadequate and come to doubt their own abilities and skills. Meanwhile, classroom dynamics vary markedly depending on the instructor’s sex, the class’ sex ratio, class size, and the gender relevance of the course. Male and female students tend to have different speaking styles in the classroom. Male and female students tend to have different attitudes toward their own abilities and different ways of dealing with failure.

Self-Concept and Gender
Aihie (2009) opined that of all the aspects of a child’s self concept, one of the most important is the discovery of the attitude toward his or her gender. Self-concept is developed not inherited. Social experiences influence the way boys and girls behave, and this can affect their self-concept development. Part of a learner’s growing up is the identification and knowledge of being a boy or a girl. This knowledge has specific implications on how the child feels about himself or herself and how others treat him or her.

Alena, Hadley, Elizabeth, Hair, & Moore (2008) maintain that both male and female adolescents struggle with negative self-concept, but female adolescents tend to worry more about physical appearance than do males. Fontana and Obidigbo (as cited in Aihie, 2009) reported that girls have lower self-concept than boys. Aihie added that the American Association of University Women reported that boys and girls begin school at the early years with equal self-concept but by the secondary school level, the self concept of girls is significantly lower than that of boys. Nwagwu and Nwaneri (as cited by Aihie, 2009) among others, however found no significant difference in the way Nigerian boys and girls perceive themselves.

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of teacher classroom practices on the self-concept of children with disabilities. However the study was limited to primary six pupils with disabilities and their teachers. Again, it used only four categories of children with disabilities (hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disabilities and speech and language impairment. There is the possibility that pupils with other kinds of disability conditions could have contributed to the study. In addition to this limitation is also the threat to the generalisability of the study to other categories of children with disabilities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
The development of self-concept among children including those with disabilities has been of great interest to parents, educators and those who respect the importance of this construct (Alawiye & Alawiye, 1984). A study conducted by Khor and Yeou (1986) revealed that teachers can enhance the development of self-concept of their students with a series of well-chosen activities, given that these teachers are supportive and they will exhibit favourable attitudes towards them. Roeser, Blumenfeld, Eccles, Harold and Wigfield (1993) also reported that teacher classroom expectations influence the self-concept of students.

In Ghana, teachers are using more generic teaching practices which have limited or no adaptations, and
such practices are not tailored to the needs of students with disabilities (Kuyini & Desai, 2008). Children with disabilities are also given unfair treatment in the classrooms (Slikker, 2009). Therefore, such children seem to go through classroom experiences which can lead to the development of low self-concept. There are also limited studies that examine the direct effect of teacher support in the classroom which include classroom practices of teachers on students’ self-concept including children with disabilities (Manning, 2007). There are no known studies on how teachers’ classroom practices influence the self-concept of children with disabilities especially in Ghana. Therefore, there is the need to find out how teachers’ classroom practices influence the development of self-concept of children with disabilities in the Tano North District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana.

Research Hypotheses
The following research hypotheses are given consideration in this study:
1. There is a statistical significant relationship between teachers’ classroom practices and self-concept of children with disabilities.
2. Types of disability have statistical significant influence on self-concept of children with disabilities.
3. There is a statistically significant difference between teachers’ classroom practices by gender and self-concept of students with disabilities.
4. There is a statistically significant relationship between gender of students with disabilities and their self-concept.

METHODOLOGY
Research Design
The research design adopted for the study was the causal comparative study or ex-post facto. In causal comparative or ex post facto research, according to Cohen, Manion and Morison (2007), the researcher takes the effect (or dependent variable) and examines the data retrospectively to establish causes, relationships or associations, and their meanings. Casual comparative or ex-post facto research design was used because teachers’ classroom practices might have already influenced the self-concept of the students and no variables were manipulated.

Research Population
The population for the study comprised all upper primary school students with disabilities and their teachers in Tano North district in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. The Accessible population was all primary six teachers in the district (69 teaches in 69 primary schools) and all primary six pupils with disabilities.

Sample and Sampling Procedures
A proportionate stratified random sampling or proportionate random sampling was used in selecting schools from the five circuits in the district. Gravetter and Forzano (2006, p.125) posit that with stratified sample, we begin by identifying a set of subgroups or segments in the population. Next, we determine what proportion of the population corresponds to each subgroup. Finally, a sample is obtained such that the proportions in the sample exactly match the proportions in the overall population. This kind of sampling is called proportionate stratified random sampling, or simply proportionate random sampling.

Thirty (30) primary schools were selected for the study. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the pupils (pupils with disabilities) for the study. Kumekpor (2002, p. 138) put forward that in purposive sampling the units of the sample are selected not by a random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for a study because of their characteristics or because they satisfy certain qualities which are not randomly distributed in the universe, but they are typical or they exhibit most of the characteristics of interest to the study.

The total sample size for the study was 98. This was made up of 68 pupils with disabilities and 30 teachers. This corresponds with the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny (Cohen, Manion, & Morison, 2005, p. 93). This statement justifies the selection of the sample size.

Research Instruments
Structured interview guide to measure the self-concept of the students with disabilities and questionnaire for teachers to measure the classroom practices of teachers were used. An observation checklist was used to measure teacher classroom practices. The questionnaire was adapted from The Personal and Academic Self-Concept Inventory (PASCI) which measures global, social, physical, and academic components of self-concept, as well as social anxiety. The PASCI (Fleming & Whalen, 1990) measure has 46 questions about students' self-esteem, social anxiety, physical self-acceptance, perceptions of verbal ability, math ability, and physical ability. Each subscale on the PASCI has shown good internal consistency (.72-.94) and test-retest reliability (.81-.98). The questionnaire for this study had 2 sections (section A and B) with a total of 42 close-ended items. Section A was mainly concerned with the background data of respondents. There were three closed-ended items which include gender, educational qualification, and the number of years in the teaching field. Section B, made up of 39 close-ended items (composed of 9 items on the social environment, 13 items on the instructional practices, 9 on the physical environment and 11 items for the classroom organization and management) with five-point Likert scale, asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree to some of their classroom practices.
The observation was structured by the use of a five (5) point Likert scale type. The observation guide or checklist was made up of 2 sections (A and B). Section A was mainly concerned with the background data of respondents. There were three closed-ended items including name of school, date and gender. Section B, made up of 35 close-ended items (composed of 8 items on the social environment, 13 items on the instructional practices, 5 on the physical environment and 10 items for the classroom organization and management).

The structured interview guide was in 2 sections A and B with a total of 32 items. There were 2 open ended questions (including name of school and date of birth) and 2 closed ended questions (including gender and type of disabilities). Section A was made up of 4 items concerned with the personal details of the respondents. The second section B was on the self-concept scale which comprised 28 items (8 items on academic self-concept, 8 items on non-academic and 12 on the general self-concept).

Validity and Reliability of Instrument
The instruments for the data collection were made available to experts in the field to determine their (instruments) validity after which they were pilot-tested using a total sample of 30 pupils with disabilities and 9 teachers in 9 primary schools in the Sunyani Municipality. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach’s alpha. The raw data were gathered and analyzed, and the queries were taken care of. The alpha values for the questionnaire, observation guide and the structured interview guide were .88, .82 and .87 respectively. Inter rater reliability for the checklist or observation guide was .78. The intra-class correlation (ICC), according to Centre for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) (2012), is a measure of agreement that is useful when there are many rating categories (5 or more).

Data Analysis
Data gathered for the study were analysed based on the hypotheses that were formulated to guide the study. Inferential statistics were used in analysing the data. The data were coded in such a way that a teacher’s score matched that of his or her students. A self-concept score of 75% (131) and above was designated high self-concept scores. A score below 75% (131) was also designated as low self-concept score. Pearson correlation was carried out to test the first hypothesis. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to test the second hypothesis. An independent sample t-test was used to test the third hypothesis. The fourth hypothesis was tested with a dependent sample t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The findings from the influence of teachers’ classroom practices on the self-concept of primary school pupils with disabilities are presented and discussed in relation to the four research hypotheses that were formulated for the study. In this study, only the statistically significant results were discussed.

Analysis of Background Data
This section of the results and discussions talk about the background data of the respondents.

Table 1: Background Data of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest academic qualification</td>
<td>Masters' degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of teaching</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 years and above</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1, 76.7% of the teachers were males and 23.3% were females. For the highest professional qualification, 56.7% had diploma, 20.0% were certificate “A” holders, 16.7% bachelor’s degree and 6.7% were senior high school certificate holders. The table further shows that in terms of the number of years of teaching, (15) 50% were within 1-5 years, (7)23.3% were within 6-10 years, (6) 20.0% had 16 years and above and within 11-15 years were 2 (6.7%).

Figure 1: Disability Distributions in the Sample

On the part of the pupils, 43 which represent 63.0% of the respondents were males and 25 which represent 37.0% were females. The distribution of pupils according to age is as follows; 7 (10.3%) were 11 years , 16 (23.5%) were 12 years, 23(33.5%) were 13 years, 10(14.7%) were 14 years, 6 (8.8%) were 15
years and 6 (8.8%) were 17 years old. From Figure 1, it can be seen that 24 representing 35.3% of the pupils had speech and language difficulty, 20 which represent 29.4% were visually impaired (mild type for example low vision), 18 which represent 26.5% were hearing impaired (mild type for example hard of hearing) and 6 which represent 8.8% had physical disabilities.

Research Hypothesis One: Relationship Between Teachers’ Classroom Practices and Self-Concept of Children with Disabilities

This section talks about the relationship between teachers’ classroom practices and the self-concept of students with disabilities. Table 2 indicates that there was a statistical significant relationship between teachers’ classroom practices and the self-concept of pupils with disabilities. There was a medium positive correlation between the two variables (r=.324, n=68, p<.05) with high score of teachers’ classroom practices associated with high score for the self-concept of pupils with disabilities (Cohen as cited in Pallant, 2005).

Table 2: Pearson Correlation between Teachers’ Classroom Practices and Self-Concept of Pupils with Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>(r)</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>P. Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ classroom</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.007 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practices and self-concept of children with disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant, p < 0.01 (An Alpha level of .01 was used for the statistical test.)

The result shows significant relationship between teachers’ classroom practices and the self-concept of pupils with disabilities. To a large extent the findings of the current study support Rehman’s (2001) assertion that there is a significant positive relationship between classroom environment and self-concept of students and suggested that the better the classroom environment, the higher the self-concept of the students. Khor and Yeou, (1986) concluded that a teacher can enhance the self-concept of his students with a series of well chosen activities, given that he is supportive and he holds favourable attitudes towards them. Again the current finding gives credence to Ishak et al (2010) that external contextual factors (e.g. teachers’ classroom practices) have an impact on the self-concept of adolescent students.

Rogers (as cited in Jolly, Aluede, & Ojugo, 2009), also, theorized that at the beginning of their lives, children cannot distinguish between themselves and their environment. As they interact with their world, children begin to distinguish between the “me” and “not me.” The self-concept continues to develop in response to our life experiences, though many aspects of it remain quite stable over time. That is, self-concept develops in response to life experiences which include teacher classroom practices.

However, the findings do not support Allodi’s (2000) study which found out that global self-concept at school do not seem to be related to the model of special support. Applying this in the context of this study, it can mean the practices of teachers in terms of supporting children with disabilities do not influence the self-concept of the children.

On the other hand, Allodi (2000) reported that peer relations appear to be more important in the development of the self-concept of children with disabilities at school. He concluded that it could be interpreted as being a compensatory strategy to maintaining a good self-concept in spite of the difficulties children with disabilities face at school. This can be said to be in line with the findings of the current study. This is because teachers’ classroom practices influences how pupils relate to one another. For example, teaching strategies such as grouping children for various assignments, cooperative learning and peer tutoring bring learners together thereby promoting healthy relationships among them.

Elbaum and Vaughn (2009) maintained that one way for teachers to have a positive impact on students’ self-concept is to incorporate critical aspects of effective self-concept interventions into ongoing academic instruction. Elbaum and Vaughn gave suggested the use of cooperative learning structures with which students with disabilities collaborate with nondisabled peers on academic tasks and receive frequent feedbacks on their work from both the teacher and their classmates.

The current finding also reaffirms Chauha (1996) argument that the school plays an important role in moulding the personality of children because a significant part of a child’s life is spent in school especially, between the ages of 6 and 20. Chauha added that the teacher is an important instrument in the instructional process, and he plays a very important role in shaping the personality of children. The way the teacher teaches and handles the students has an effect on the personality development of children and the emotional climate which in turn will influence their self-concept.

Research Hypothesis Two: Influence on Self-Concept of Children with Disabilities.

From Table 3 pupils with disabilities were divided into four groups (Group 1: Physical Disabilities; Group 2: Visual Impairment; Group 3: Hearing Impairment: Group 4: Speech and Language Difficulty). There was no statistically significant difference (p>.05) in self-concept scores of children...
with different types of disabilities \[ F (3, 64) = .81, p=.49 \]. This indicates that types of disabilities have no influence on the self-concept of children with disabilities. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

### Table 3: One Way Analysis of Variance of the Type of Disability and Self-Concept of Pupils with Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Type of disability on Self-concept of pupils with disabilities.</td>
<td>Physical impairment</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.49**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hearing impairment</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual impairment</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speech and language difficulty</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Not significant, An Alpha level of .05 was used for the statistical test**

### Research Hypothesis Three: Difference between Teachers’ Classroom Practices by Gender and Self-Concept of Students with Disabilities

Research question three dealt with teachers’ classroom practices by gender and the self-concept of pupils with disabilities.

### Table 4: Independent t-Test for Teachers’ Classroom Practices by Gender and Self-Concept of Pupils with Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. dev.</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.76**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>16.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Not Significant, Number=68, degrees of freedom=56.56. An Alpha level of .05 was used for the statistical test.**

An independent sample t-test was used to test the difference between teachers’ classroom practices by gender and the self-concept of children with disabilities. Results from Table 4 show that there was no statistical significant difference between scores for teachers’ classroom practices for males (M=1.17, SD=10.49) and females (M=1.15, SD=16.81), t (68) = .31, p = .76 (two tailed), d=66.56). This denotes that teachers’ gender does not influence the self-concept of children with disabilities. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

### Research Hypothesis Four: Relationship between Gender of Students with Disabilities and Their Self-Concept

A statistically significant relationship was obtained \[ \chi^2 (1, N=66) = 5.69, p=.008 \]. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence the relationship between gender of pupils and their self-concept is a statistically significant

### Table 5: Gender of Pupils and their Self-concept Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>High concept N</th>
<th>High concept %</th>
<th>Low concept N</th>
<th>Low concept %</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5, 43 (65.1%) of the males had high self-concept. Also only 8 (32.0%) of the females had higher self-concept. It came out that 15(34.8%) of the males had low self-concept. On the part of the females, 17 (68.0%) out of the total number of respondents had low self-concept. It can therefore be deduced from the above analysis that more males have higher self-concept than females.

The current finding does not mirror the finding of Mishra, and Singh (2012) and Aihie (2009). Mishra and Singh (2012) did a comparative study of self-concept and self-confidence of sighted and visually impaired children. They found that there exists no significant difference between the self-concept of males and females. Aihie (2009) found no significant effect of sex on the self-concept of adolescents. Further analysis of Aihies’ study also revealed no interactive effect of treatment and sex on the self concept of the adolescents. However, Enam (2006) reported that multidimensional self-concept of young children was found to be conditioned by gender. Enam found significantly higher self-concept for girls than boys.

Pierson and Glaeser (2002) compared adolescents by gender on self-concept. Findings were not significant when male and female adolescents were divided by class placement and ranked within placement. However, one significant effect was found when analyzed without the division of class placement or rank within placement. Males scored significantly lower on social self-concept. The results suggest that there are differences between adolescent males and females on social self-concept. Rehman (2001) also found that male and female students exhibit different self-concept scores and this is in line with the current finding. Rehman’s study further indicated that male students of his population have higher self-concept than female counterparts. His finding suggests that teacher’s exhibit gender discrimination against females in the classroom. By implication, if teachers’ classroom practices are positively related to the self-concept of students, then equal opportunities for both genders should yield results which are not different. The differences in the findings could also be attributed to the cultural settings. As the school is part of the larger group, what goes on in the society at large is likely to be replicated in the classroom or school situation.
Tsikata and Seini (2004) posit that gender inequalities exist in Ghana. Baden, Green, Otoo-Oyortey and Peasgood (1994) assert that the ethnic, cultural and agro-ecological diversity in Ghana make generalisation about gender relations and their consequences for women’s access to resources, decision making and status extremely difficult. Baden et al further added that violence against women is widespread at institutional, community and domestic levels, which takes a variety of forms. This discrimination in the Ghanaian society can lead to lower self-concept development for women in general, and the classroom can mirror this condition.

In terms of discipline, according to Saskatchewan Education (1991), males are disciplined more frequently and more harshly by teachers than females even when both genders misbehave in identical ways. Some teachers have different expectations concerning behaviour of females than they do for males. Females receive more encouragement to be quiet and passive than males. It can be deduced from the above that teachers’ classroom practices in Ghana might not be different from the conditions reported. Baden et al., (1994) put forward that there exists gender biases in the curriculum and stated that there is the possibility that teachers give girls less attention in the classroom. From the foregoing, it can be suggested that the differences in the self-concept of males and females suggest gender inequality in teachers’ classroom practices. Again, female students with disabilities seem to go through classroom experiences which are detrimental to the development of self-concept than their male counterparts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this study has shed light on teachers’ classroom practices and self concept of children with disabilities. A positive significant relationship between teachers’ classroom practices and self concept of children with disabilities indicate that teachers are crucial in enhancing the self concept of children. Again, it was noted from the present study that teachers’ classroom practices did not differ by types of disability. This implies that in spite of the disability type children with disabilities have the same level of self concept. Finally, differences in the self concept of males and females reflect the gender inequalities in the educational system.

It is therefore recommended that curriculum planners consider this issue. Teachers must also be aware of the tendency to discriminate against females or girls in the classroom, and should ensure gender equality in the classroom. This also calls for gender advocacy groups to organize training workshops for teachers on how to ensure gender equality in the classroom, and this should also go for the community as a whole.

REFERENCES


