

# Effects of Assertiveness Training Technique on Low Self-Concept among Secondary School Students in Awka Education Zone

American Journal of Creative Education

Vol. 2, No. 2, 81-92, 2019

e-ISSN: 2706-6088



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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effects of assertiveness training technique on the low self-concept of secondary school students in Awka Education Zone. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study is quasi experimental research and the specific design adopted was non-randomized pre-test post-test control group. The population of the study was made up of 650 (six hundred and fifty) senior secondary 1 and 11 students. A sample of 100 (one hundred students were obtained for the study through purposive sampling technique. A validated instrument – adolescent personal data inventory, self-concept sub-scale was used for data collection. Mean scores were used to answer research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested at  $P < 0.05$  level of significance using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The findings of this study among others are that: assertiveness training technique is effective in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students, and no significant difference exists in the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing male and female secondary school students' self-concept. Consequent upon the findings, it was recommended that students' guidance counsellors should use assertiveness training technique in enhancing secondary school students' self-concept.

**Keywords:** *Self-concept, Low self-concept, Assertiveness training, Students, Experimental group, Secondary school.*

**DOI:** 10.20448/815.22.81.92

Citation | Anyamene, Ada; Nwosu, Georgina Ugwuezi (2019). Effects of Assertiveness Training Technique on Low Self-Concept among Secondary School Students in Awka Education Zone. American Journal of Creative Education, 2(2): 81-92.

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**Funding:** This study received no specific financial support.

**Competing Interests:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**History:** Received: 6 June 2019/ Revised: 10 July 2019/ Accepted: 16 August 2019/ Published: 30 September 2019

**Publisher:** Online Science Publishing

### Highlights of this paper

- The study investigated the effects of assertiveness training technique on the low self-concept of secondary school students in Awka Education Zone.
- The study is quasi experimental research and the specific design adopted was non-randomized pre-test post-test control group.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background to the Study

Low self-concept is a behaviour problem that students exhibit when they have negative perception about themselves. This negative perception could be that the students have feeling of being ugly, unintelligent, inadequate, lacking good qualities and potentials, being poor among others. These feelings make the students not to value, regard themselves, and have sense of belonging. Low self-concept causes many behaviour problems like withdrawal, unassertiveness, shyness, poor communication skills, lack of confidence, anxiety, and timidity, among others. Hyper vigilance, chaotic relationship, self-sabotaging, reactionary, overly critical of self and others, defensiveness, rigidity, poor and under academic achievement, among others are characteristics of low self-concept individuals. Irrational thought/illogical thought, distorted statements, faulty self-image, depression, antagonism, projection, aggression, among others exhibited by low self-concept students characterized poor mental health thus [Derlega and Janda \(2008\)](#) emphasized that good mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness.

The psychological behaviour problem influences the students' identity, role and overall life. Low self-concept hinders students the opportunity of maintaining a healthy personality. The students do not have full personality satisfaction and this is a fundamental issue in the students' life. This is worrisome to students, students' guidance counsellors, psychologists and others. A positive self-concept is important for an individual's general life and mental health and [McCandles \(2008\)](#) pointed that an individual with high self-concept is more likely to live a happy life because the individual will be able to accept and live with himself.

The predispose causes of low self-concept among secondary school students are parents' socio-economic status, academic performance, physical appearance, peer influence, parenting style among others. The main cause of low self-concept among secondary school students is illogical/irrational thought.

Some others like [Anigala \(2017\)](#) have identified negative self-concept as factor amongst others that are responsible for student's poor academic performance. Equally researchers like [Nalah \(2018\)](#) reported self-concept as a correlate of academic performance. He observed that one of the difficulties people experience in education is closely related to the way they see themselves. This implies that many students who have difficulty in school or perform poorly academically, are not hampered as a result of lack of understanding or poor economic status of parents but because they have learned to see themselves as incapable of handling academic work. Looking at the above statics and research results, though the reasons for this epidemic of poor academic performance are arguably numerous, they can be traced to poor self-concept of students. A good number of studies have used 'self-concept' to determine its effect on academic performance.

Low self-concept is associated with numerous maladaptive behaviours and behaviour problems. This calls for methodical approach to modify the behaviour problem. Thus the researcher used assertiveness training technique to modify low self-concept among secondary school students. Assertiveness training consists of the arrangement of the environmental situations in order that certain behaviour inhibited by anxiety can be expressed in overt behaviour ([Wolpe and Lazarus, 2010](#)). In the opinion of [Galata \(2018\)](#) to lead successful life being assertive is crucial. Whether the purposes of individuals are to be successful in education, work, social life and the like, being assertive is very important. Especially, since the period of adolescence is the time when individuals are attending

their education at high school levels and beyond and also preparing themselves for adult roles and responsibilities, they are supposed to be assertive enough. Assertiveness training in the context of this study involves training one to act boldly, confident, express his/her feelings, opinion, imbibe social skills, and stand up to one's right in order to inculcate in an individual the assertiveness characteristics required for maintenance of high self-concept.

Some of the numerous characteristics of a low self-concept individual are difficulty in expressing his/her feelings/opinion especially if others disagree with the individual, experiencing difficulty handling interpersonal issues requiring him to assert himself. Other characteristics are difficulty letting others know what one wants, turning down requests, asking a favour, standing up for his right, expressing disapproval, and lack of confidence. Assertiveness training technique is one of the techniques to modify the above unassertive behaviours. The efficacy of assertiveness training in improving the social skills of isolates corroborates with the studies of [Ugwuegbulam \(2008\)](#) who discovered that assertiveness training makes an individual to improve on his interpersonal relationship. Furthermore, assertiveness training enhances individuals' interaction among themselves and this reduces withdrawal/isolate tendency, thereby encourages exhibition of social skills. [Stake et al. \(2009\)](#) and [Nwoye \(2018\)](#) have attested to the use of assertiveness training to enhance social skills which have been shown to have positive benefits for students' self-concept.

Assertiveness is a skill which can empower the teenagers' self-efficacy and positively impress their interactions with others to cause their trust and self-esteem. The defects in this skill can result in many problems for young people. Assertiveness is of great importance in adolescents due to their age and peer group pressure. Furthermore, it can protect them against the factors threatening their health. Assertiveness is closely associated with self-confidence, self-esteem, anxiety ([Ghodrati et al., 2016](#)). The effectiveness of assertiveness training in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students could be moderated by gender. Assertiveness training has its treatment procedure and as such would have different effects on male and female low self-concept secondary school students. The researcher ascertained the gender that assertiveness training technique worked better on.

Therefore, it is against this background that the researcher investigated the effects of assertiveness training technique on the low self-concept among secondary school students in Awka Education Zone.

### *1.2. Statement of the Problem*

The problem of the study is that low self concept causes or is associated with many behaviour problems and maladaptive behaviours including poor and under academic performance among secondary school students; therefore student's guidance counsellors should be sensitized to pay more attention in modifying low self-concept among secondary school students. When behaviour modification is not done on students by the students' guidance counsellors, low self-concept, behaviour problems and maladaptive behaviours associated with low self-concept cannot be modified.

### *1.3. Purpose of the Study*

The main purpose of the study is to determine the effects of assertiveness training technique on the low self-concept among secondary school students in Awka Education Zone.

Specifically the study intends to determine:

1. The effects of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of secondary school students when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their pre-test and post-test scores.

2. The effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of male and female secondary school students using their pre-test and post-test scores.

#### *1.4. Significance of the Study*

The study would be useful to students, teachers, students' guidance counsellors, researchers, and society.

The study would benefit the students as the effectiveness of assertiveness training in enhancing students' self-concept would make the students to imbibe assertive behaviours that would enhance students' effective interaction with their teachers and fellow students during teaching and learning.

The effectiveness of assertiveness training in enhancing secondary school students' self-concept would be of immense benefit to teachers because the students' assertive behaviours like expression of feelings, opinion, and acting boldly among others would enhance students' quick understanding of the topics thought during teaching and learning, thereby making teachers' effort fruitful.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing secondary school students' self-concept would ginger teachers to make referral to students' guidance counsellors on low self-concept students for guidance and counselling.

The study's finding on the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students would be beneficial to future researchers who would be working on the related problem because the study would be a literature the future researchers would use to make a meaningful research work. Also the findings of the study would provide researchers a clue to possible areas for further studies in order to fill the gap unfilled by this study.

The effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students would make the low self-concept students to have an improved personality thereby interact and contribute to the society positively and this would affect the society positively. Moreover the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique would make the students imbibe assertive behaviours that would enhance their effective interaction in the society.

#### *1.5. Scope of the Study*

The scope was delimited to the effects of assertiveness training technique on the low self-concept among senior secondary 1 and 11 (SS1 and SS11) students in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. The study was delimited to public co-educational secondary schools in the zone. The independent variable was assertiveness training technique while low self-concept was the dependent variable. The only moderating variable was the students' gender.

#### *1.6. Research Questions*

The following two research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of secondary school students when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their pre-test and post-test scores?
2. What is the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of male and female secondary school students using their pre-test and post-test scores?

#### *1.7. Hypotheses*

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at .05 level of significance.

1. *There is no significant difference in the effect of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of secondary school students when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their pre-test and post-test scores.*
2. *There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of male and female secondary school students using their pre-test and post-test scores.*

### *1.8. Low Self-Concept*

Self-concept is a person's perception of himself formed through his experiences with the environment (Akinpelu, 2009). But some authors have self-concept to be reflection of the evaluation of other people in the environment about them (Smith, 2008; Cooley, 2010). This means that individuals' sense of self-concept is primarily formed as a result of their perceptions of how others perceive them. In other words, the appraisals of others act as mirror reflections that provide the information that individuals use to define/determine their own sense of self. Self-concept could be low or high. Low self-concept is a negative perception an individual has about himself (Nwankwo, 2009). This negative perception (illogical/irrational thought) about event and self exert a strong negative influence on the individual. Environmental experiences do not cause low self-concept but the way these experiences are perceived/interpreted by an individual causes low self-concept thus Rational Emotive Theory hinges on this.

### *1.9. Assertiveness Training*

Wolpe and Lazarus (2010) viewed assertiveness training as consisting of the arrangement of environmental situations with the client so that certain behaviours inhibited by anxiety, can be expressed in overt behaviour. They maintained that assertiveness training gradually counters and conditions the fear and anxiety a person associates with a particular situation. Assertiveness training has its theoretical framework on instrumental/operant conditioning. Instrumental conditioning deals with strengthening and weakening of behaviour by the stimulus consequences. When the consequence is positive, the behaviour is strengthened and when it is negative, the behaviour is weakened. When assertiveness training results to the students building self-confidence, expression of feelings, opinion and acting boldly, imbibing social skills, and standing up their rights; generally being assertive, (positive consequence) the assertiveness training is strengthened. This means that the students will continue to practice the activities/training which probably will improve the students' low self-concept characteristics. When the activities/training does not result to students exhibiting assertiveness behaviour, the assertiveness training is weakened (not repeated).

Methods used in assertiveness training technique are behaviour rehearsal, modelling, reinforcement, bibliotherapy, coaching, covert rehearsal, among others (Nwankwo, 2009). Salman (2015) presented four steps in building assertiveness as follows: (1) Realize where changes are needed and believe in your rights. (2) Figure appropriate way of asserting yourself in each specific situation that concerns one. (3) Practice giving assertive responses. (4) Try being assertive in real life situations. Ammoni (2013) pointed some assertiveness and self-confidence methods as (1) know the facts relating to situation and have the details to hand. (2) Anticipate other peoples' behaviour and prepare your response. (3) Re-condition and practice your own new reactions to aggressive and dominant people. (4) Have faith that your own abilities and style will ultimately work if you use them. (5) Prepare and use good open questions to expose flaws in the other people's argument, for example 'what is your evidence for what you have claimed/said?'

## 2. METHOD

The study is a quasi experimental research. The specific design adopted is non-randomized pre-test post-test control group. One school was used as experimental group and the other school was used as control group. Pre-test was given to the students in the two groups in order to ascertain their self-concept. Then experimental group received treatment on assertiveness training while the control group was kept busy with counselling on low self-concept. The two groups were given a post-test at the end of the exercise to test their self-concept again.

**Table-1.** A non-randomized pre-test post-test control group design.

Group	Pre-test	Research condition	Post-test
Exptl Gp	O <sub>1</sub>	X1 (AT treatment)	O <sub>2</sub>
Control Gp	O <sub>1</sub>	X11 (Conventional counselling)	O <sub>2</sub>

Source: Akuezuilo and Agu (2015): Educational research textbook.

O<sub>1</sub> – Pre-test on self-concept that was given to all the students in the two groups (Experimental group, and control group).

XI – AT: Assertiveness training treatment that was given to experimental Gp.

XII – Conventional counselling that was given to control group.

O<sub>2</sub> – Post-test on self-concept that was given to all the students in the two groups (Experimental group, and control group).

The study was carried out in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State Nigeria. The population of the study was 650 senior secondary 1 and 11 students. The sample for the study was 90 senior secondary 1 and 11 (SS1 and SS11) co-educational students from Awka Education Zone identified with low self-concept. Purposive sampling technique was used to select from the five local government areas that made up Awka Education Zone two co-educational secondary schools with the highest number of students identified with low self-concept using the under displayed self-concept inventory, a sub-scale of adolescent personal data inventory developed by Akinboye (2001). The baseline for the selection of these students was done by picking the students that their scores on the Self-Concept Inventory range from 30 – 89. The self-concept inventory has 30 items as indicated below. One school with fifty low-self concept students was treated/handled with assertiveness training technique (experimental group), while another school with forty low self-concept students was the control group that received counselling on low self-concept.

The items used evaluative phrases of “most like me” for most descriptive of the client and were rated 4, and 5 and “least like me” for least descriptive of the client and were rated 1, and 2. Items for which clients were not sure were rated 3. Positive items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28, and 30 were scored 1,2,3,4, and 5 while negative items of 4, 5, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, and 29 were revised to 5,4,3,2,and 1 scores. The total score of a client on the scale indicates his self-concept. 90 – 150 score range indicates high self-concept while score range of 89 and below indicates low self-concept. The instrument was a standardized one, in order words the psychometric properties of the instrument has been ascertained, so the researcher adopted it. The instrument was distributed with the help of the research assistant.

### 2.1. Treatment

#### 2.1.1. Issues Handled in Sessions of Assertiveness Training Technique on Low Self-Concept

The issues handled in sessions of assertiveness training on the low self-concept students took the following sequence:

**Table-2.** Adolescent personal data inventory, self-concept sub- scale.

	Least like me		Undecided	Most like me	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I have warm social attraction for others					
2. I am a responsible person					
3. My life has great value for me					
4. I am afraid of enemies					
5. I am a submissive person					
6. I am active					
7. I am confident about what people think about me					
8. I am concerned about what other people think about me					
9. I constantly feel insecure					
10. I express my feelings freely					
11. I am an optimistic person					
12. I usually like people					
13. I like to work hard					
14. I can face my difficulty in life					
15. I am ambitious over attaining mastery of things					
16. I am unreliable					
17. I may lie in certain situations					
18. I fear I would fail on anything I plan to do					
19. I am self-centered					
20. I always agree with my mates on all issues					
21. I am dependably reliable					
22. I often feel lonely					
23. I am original in all ways					
24. I am Lazy					
25. I am shy					
26. I am always methodical					
27. I like to generate new ideas all the time					
28. I am always thirsty for knowledge					
29. Life is meaningless					
30. I like to be myself always					

Source: Adolescent personal data inventory developed by Akinboye (2001).

In addition to achieving expression of feelings, opinion, and acting boldly, self-confidence, social skills and standing up to one’s right through assertiveness training, the under mentioned students’ low self-concept characteristics were improved with adoption of assertive behaviour.

Rigidity: Students’ assertive behaviour made them to make use of their opinions and ideas to amend the already existing accepted notions, and this made them not to stick to their former ideas/notions rigidly.

Abhorring criticism: Students’ assertive behaviour of expressing their feelings, having confidence and acting boldly made them to take criticisms but were able to defend themselves.

Self-sabotaging: Students’ assertive behaviour of boldness, confidence, expression of feelings, and standing up to their rights, made them not to be easily influenced or intimidated to do something that is not to their interest.

Withdrawal: Students’ assertive behaviour made them not to be afraid to be in the mist of people because they have the confidence, boldness, expression of feelings, have communication skills and can stand up to their rights thereby do not withdraw from people.

Illogical thought: Students’ assertive behaviour made them to express their opinions, have confidence, and act boldly, thereby change some illogical thoughts that occupy their mind about themselves.

Self-defeating statements: The confidence and boldness imbibed by the students through assertiveness training made them to have an improved perception of self that helped them change or do away with some self-defeating statements.

Imagination of negative things that people think about them: Students' assertiveness made them to be confident, bold, expression of feelings, and live up to their rights thereby imagine less that people think about them negatively.

**Table-3.** Experimental training.

WK	Assertiveness behaviour	Assertiveness training methods
1	Introduction, definition of self-concept, low self-concept and assertiveness training	
2	Expression of feelings, opinions, and acting boldly.	Coaching, "knowing the facts relating to the situation and have the detail to hand, Scratched Record, and "I Messages".
3	Building self-confidence	Knowing the facts relating to the situation and have the details to hand, having faith that one's abilities and style will ultimately work if one use them, and anticipating other peoples' behaviour and prepare your response.
4	Imbibing social skills	Coaching, anticipating other people's behaviour and prepare your response, taking criticism as well as giving it and "I Message".
5	Standing up to one's right	'I Messages', Scratched Record, taking criticisms as well as giving it, re-condition and practice your own new reactions to aggressive and dominant people, prepare and use good open questions to expose flaws in other peoples' arguments.
6	Standing up to one's right	'I Messages', Scratched Record, taking criticisms as well as giving it, re-condition and practice your own new reactions to aggressive and dominant people, prepare and use good open questions to expose flaws in other peoples' arguments.
7	Rehearsal on exhibition of assertive behaviours	Behaviour Rehearsal and Role- Playing.
8	Evaluation, post-test, and encouragement.	

**Note:** Classroom and other hypothetical situations were used with the assertiveness methods to inculcate in the students the assertiveness behaviours.

### 2.1.2. Issues Handled in the Counselling Sessions on Low Self-Concept for the Control Group

The issues handled in the counselling sessions for the control group took the following sequence:

**Week 1.** Introduction.

**Week 2.** Definition and explanation on self-concept and low self-concept.

**Week 3.** Explanation on the predispose and main causes of low self-concept.

**Week 4.** Explanation on the characteristics of low self-concept individuals.

**Week 5.** Explanation on the behaviour problems associated with low self-concept.

**Week 6.** Explanation on prevention of low self-concept. Here, the students were made to understand that it is not event/condition that causes low self-concept but irrational/illogical thought about the event. This was buttressed by explaining to them a situation where two individuals are ugly, one's irrational thought that ugliness is so bad makes her to have low self-concept. While the other person's thought that she has other qualities irrespective of her ugliness makes her not to have low self-concept. Students were made to understand that low self-concept could be prevented by having logical/rational thought.

**Week 7.** Summary and evaluation.

**Week 8.** Post-test on self-concept.

### 3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Research question 1: What is the effects of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of secondary school students when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their pre-test and post-test scores?

**Table-4.** Pre-test and post-test mean self-concept scores of students treated with assertiveness training technique and those in the control group.

Source of variation	N	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Gained mean	Remark
Assertiveness training	50	81.14	101.42	20.28	Effective
Control	40	76.53	85.80	9.27	

Source: Result of data analysis 2019.

Table 4 indicates that the students treated with assertiveness training technique had pre-test mean score of 81.14 and post-test mean score of 101.42 with gained mean 20.28 in their self-concept, while the students in the control group who received conventional counselling had pre-test mean score of 76.53 and post-test mean score of 85.8 with gained mean 9.27. Therefore assertiveness training technique is effective in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students.

Research question 2: What is the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of male and female secondary school students using their pre-test and post-test scores?

**Table-5.** Pre-test and post-test mean self-concept scores of male and female students treated with assertiveness training technique.

Source of variation	N	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Gained mean	Remark
Male	22	72.3	80	8.3	AT more effect on male
Female	28	70	75	5	

Source: Result of data analysis 2019.

Table 5 indicates that the male students treated with assertiveness training technique had pre-test mean score of 72.3 and post-test mean score of 80 with gained mean 8.3 in their self-concept, while the female students treated with assertiveness training technique had pre-test mean score of 70 and post-test mean score of 75 with gained mean 5 in their self-concept. Assertiveness training technique is more effective in enhancing male secondary school students' low self-concept.

#### 3.1. Testing the Null Hypotheses

*Null hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the effect of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of secondary school students when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their pre-test and post-test scores.*

**Table-6.** ANCOVA on the post-test mean self-concept scores of students treated with assertiveness training technique and those who received conventional counseling.

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	Cal. F	P-value	P ≥ 0.05
Corrected model	7163.165	2	3581.583			
Intercept	924.134	1	924.134			
Pretest score	1741.290	1	1741.290			
Treatment model	3055.836	1	3055.836			
Error	9171.290	87	105.417	28.99	.000	S
Total	819679.000	90				
Corrected total	16334.456	89				

Source: Result of data analysis 2019.

Table 6 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated F is 28.99 with value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected. So, the effect of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of secondary school students is significant.

*Null hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing the low self-concept of male and female secondary school students using their pre-test and post-test scores.*

Table-7. ANCOVA on the post-test mean self-concept scores of male and female students treated with assertiveness training technique.

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	Cal. F	P-value	P ≥ 0.05
Corrected model	901.183	2	450.591			
Intercept	420.128	1	420.128			
Pretest score	788.683	1	788.683			
Treatment model	64.342	1	64.342			
Error	7836.997	47	166.745	0.39	0.54	S
Total	523039.000	50				
Corrected total	8738.180	49				

Source: Result of data analysis 2019.

Table 7 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated F is 0.39 with value of 0.54 which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the fourth null hypothesis is accepted. So, the difference in the effect of assertiveness training on male and female secondary school students is not significant.

#### 4. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

From the analysis, the following findings were made:

- Assertiveness training technique is effective in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students.
- The effect of assertiveness training technique on secondary school students' self-concept is significant.
- The difference in the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique on male and female secondary school students' self-concept is not significant.

#### 5. DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The finding of this study showed that assertiveness training technique enhanced self-concept among secondary school students. In other words the self-concept of students improved after being trained assertively. This present study is consistent with the prior study by Nnodum (2010) and Stake et al. (2009) who reported that assertiveness training technique was effective in enhancing students' self-concept. The possible reason that might explain the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students is that assertiveness training technique is one of the best techniques to handle most of the low self-concept characteristics like lack of self-confidence among others.

The finding of this study showed that effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing secondary school students' self-concept was significant. This means that application of assertiveness training technique brought improved self-concept among secondary school students. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ugwuegbulam (2008) who discovered that assertiveness training makes an individual to improve on his interpersonal relationship. The possible reason that might explain the effectiveness of assertiveness training in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students is that assertiveness training technique is one of the best techniques to handle most of the low self-concept characteristics like lack of self-confidence, social skills, standing up to one's right, expression of feelings, opinion and acting boldly.

The finding of this study showed that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique on male and female secondary school students' self-concept. This means that improvement on the self-concept of male and female secondary school students using assertiveness training technique records no significant difference. The reason for this could be that assertiveness training technique procedures suits both gender.

Another finding of this study is that there was no significant gender difference on the effects of assertiveness training technique on secondary school students' low self-concept. In particular the slight decrease in the low self concept of male students was higher than that of female secondary school students after they had participated in assertive training technique. This suggests that male students benefited more from assertiveness training technique than female students did. The reasons for significance may be because of the boys are more naturally assertive than their female counterpart. This findings is support the work of [Ghodrati et al. \(2016\)](#) who claimed that assertiveness training increase self concept of adolescents. The difference may be due to chance. Being female students is not a determinant of the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique, rather both male and female students actually benefitted equally from the technique. One possibility that might help explain why students' low self concept was reduced almost equally for both gender was that assertiveness training technique were equally enriching and intense for both age types. In this study, both male and female students in the experimental group were prompted and given space to discuss the causes of low self concept and ways to combat low self concept. All these might have helped to reduced their low self concept.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Assertiveness training technique is effective in enhancing self-concept among secondary school students. Difference in the effectiveness of assertiveness training technique in enhancing self-concept of male and female secondary school students is not significant.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

1. Student guidance counsellors should use assertiveness training technique in enhancing secondary school students' self-concept.
2. Assertiveness training should be used by the students' counsellors to enhance students' assertive behaviours.

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